



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

July 29, 2009

HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN ALEXIOS` REFLECTIONS ON THE DORMITION

As you know, the month of August is dedicated to the Panagia, and her Dormition. Of course, in predominantly Orthodox countries, we would really experience the spirit and the significance of this holy and blessed season. However here in the United States, Orthodox Christians are a minority so that we must become more intentional and strive to take advantage of the ways that our Church helps us in this attempt, such as the Paraklesis.

The Paraklesis is a beautiful and poetic canon that has been written to express our feelings and our devotion to the Most Holy Mother of God, and to ask her intercession. In these magnificent hymns so full of meaning and emotions, we cry out to her, recognizing our humility and sinfulness and entreating her to help us. As we are wracked with "weaknesses of body, with most serious ailments and with passions so dark" and "with my temptations surrounding me, searching for salvation, I have sought refuge in you."

Because I want all of you to truly experience the joy of the Feast of the Dormition, I encourage you to begin fasting now. Fasting is an essential part of Orthodox life, for if we are able to fast, we can control our thoughts and our minds and guide them to focus on the Most Holy Mother of God.