



*August 12, 2009*

**HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN ALEXIOS`  
REFLECTIONS ON THE FEAST DAY OF THE DORMITION  
OF THE THEOTOKOS**

Now we eagerly anticipate the culmination of this blessed Fast - the Dormition of the Theotokos on Saturday.

This is a special time for us, because, as we all know, the Theotokos is the Mother of our Lord, intercessor and mediator for us with her Son in Heaven. Yet for all that, she is one of us, a human woman, a mother. She is in a very real sense, *our* mother, and one who has experienced all the joys and sorrows of our common life. Think of the joy beyond measure she felt as she responded with her whole heart to the message of God brought to her by the Archangel Gabriel! Think also of the unfathomable pain and sorrow she felt when her only son, our Lord Jesus Christ, was crucified. Since she is as close to us as our own mothers, we feel connected to her.

In the history of the Church there are many wonderful stories about the death of the Theotokos. Tradition tells us that she prepared herself through prayer and fasting and that the 12 Apostles, though they were preaching the Gospel all over the earth, learned of her imminent death and were all able to be at her bedside to pray with her. All of them, that is, except for Thomas, who arrived a few days later and

naturally asked to see the body of the mother of our Lord. Imagine how they all felt when her tomb was opened, and her body was not there, because our Lord took His mother up to heaven.

I have shared with you before how beautifully this Feast Day is celebrated in Greece. If you were to visit Tinos, you would be greatly moved by the sight of hundreds of people on their knees, for a quarter of a mile, as they journeyed to ask for her intercession or to thank her for her intercession. Of course, it is not only Tinos, but many other places, such as monasteries where the monks and nuns have been fasting and praying all through these days. Many of you have visited other Orthodox lands and have participated in this kind of worship with all the people, sharing together all the feelings of pain, joy, sadness and hope intermingled, that in our Church we call "harmdypi" or "joyful sorrow."

In times past, people often referred to the Feast Day of the Dormition of the Theotokos as the "Summer Pascha." So with this, I wish you a joyous and blessed Pascha!

May we all be spiritually uplifted and sustained by the prayers and love of our Lord's Most Pure Mother!