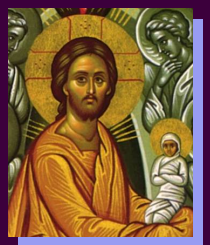
What wondrous gifts our God has given us!

Feast of the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

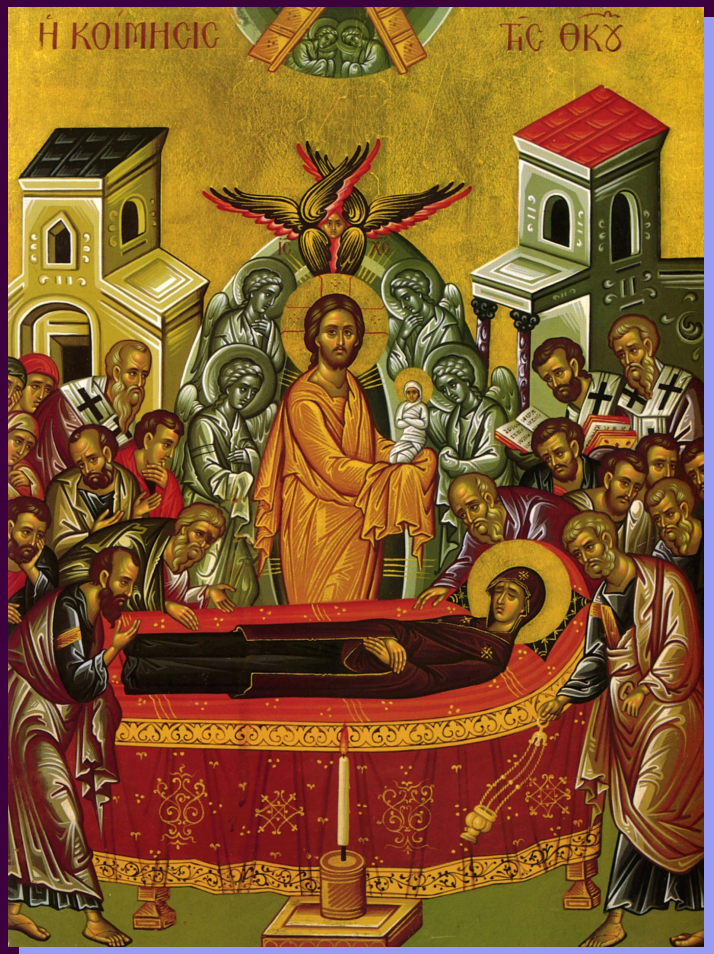
August 15

+ Above Christ, the gates of heaven stand open, ready to receive the Theotokos.

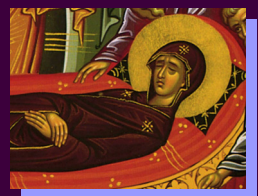


+ Christ holds the soul of the Theotokos, shown as a small, swaddled child.
+ He cradles her child-like soul in a way that reminds us of the Panagia holding Him as a child.
+ To be a "God-bearer," to carry the Word of God within us in this life, is the calling of all Christians.
+ The "reward" for this in this life is suffering at the hands of God's enemies, but our hope is that in the next life, God will bear our soul into His own hands and carry us into eternity.

+ The icon shows the Theotokos on her deathbed surrounded by the Apostles.
+ On the left side, the Apostle Paul bows low in honor of her.
+ On the right side, the Apostle Peter censes the body of the Theotokos.
+ The posture of the Apostles direct attention towards her.



+ Holy Tradition tells us that at the time of the falling asleep of the Theotokos, the Apostles were abroad, preaching the Gospel throughout the world.
+ All but Thomas were mystically transported to her bedside.
+ Thomas did arrive on the third day, after her burial, but when he was brought to her tomb to venerate her body, the tomb was empty.
+ Church Tradition states that she was bodily resurrected and taken to heaven, as will all the righteous on Judgment Day.



+ The Panagia died as all people do because all of humanity is affected by this world's corruption.
+ Having truly died, she was raised by her Son as the "Mother of Life" and already participates in the eternal life of paradise.
+ The icon and the feast of the Dormition remind us that this same paradise is promised to all who *"hear the word of God and keep it"* (Luke 11:27-28).
+ We celebrate the fact that what happens to the Mother of God will happen to all who imitate her holy life of humility, obedience and love.

What can we give back?

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