

Encyclical for the Feast of the Holy Dormition 2019

Diocese of Western Europe

“Neither the tomb nor death could confine the Theotokos, the unshakable hope, ever vigilant in intercession and protection. As Mother of life, He who dwelt in the ever-virginal womb transposed Her to life.”

Kontakion for the Feast of the Holy Dormition

It comes, of course, as no surprise to any pious Orthodox Christian that Christ would transpose His Mother after her death to His heavenly kingdom and that “neither the tomb nor death could confine the One who bore God” in Her womb. How could the very Mother of Life remain in death?

What a fantastic reassurance for the Christian is this present feast of the transposition of the Theotokos from the tomb! Pious Orthodox Christians are children of God and have the Most Holy Theotokos as their mother. If we remain as such - true children - then Christ will not leave those brethren of life to be confined by death.

Every child seeks his mother. Every child cries out to his mother. Every child wants to be with his mother. So every pious Orthodox Christian wants to be with his Heavenly Mother. An earthly mother can provide so many good things to her child. The Heavenly Mother though is also the Mother of Life and so leads Her children unto life, unto Her Son and God.

Let us, with this present feast, be like the Holy Apostles and gather at Gethsemane at the burial of the Mother of Life. May She, who leads all those who love Her to Her Son, lead us also from death unto Her Son who is the Life. Let us, like the Holy Apostles stand around Her, awaiting Her guidance unto Her Son!

Wishing you the the comfort of our Mother,
+ Bishop Philaretos