

## St. Gregory Palamas: Homily on the Dormition

palamas homily 8 CLEANED St. Gregory Palamas: Homily 8 (Sanitized) A Homily on the Dormition of Our Supremely Pure Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary by St. Gregory Palamas Both love and duty today fashion my homily for your charity. It is not only that I wish, because of my love for you, and because I am obliged by the sacred canons, to bring to your God- loving ears a saving word and thus to nourish your souls, but if there be any among those things that bind by obligation and love and can be narrated with praise for the Church, it is the great deed of the Ever-Virgin Mother of God. The desire is double, not single, since it induces me, entreats and persuades me, whereas the inexorable duty constrains me, though speech cannot attain to what surpasses it, just as the eye is unable to look fixedly upon the sun. One cannot utter things which surpass speech, yet it is within our power by the love for mankind of those hymned, to compose a song of praise and all at once both to leave untouched intangible things, to satisfy the debt with words and to offer up the first fruits of our love for the Mother of God in hymns composed according to our abilities. If, then, "death of the righteous man is honorable" (cf. Ps. 115:6) and the "memory of the just man is celebrated with songs of praise" (Prov. 10:7). How much more ought we to honor with great praises the memory of the holiest of the saints, she by whom all holiness is afforded to the saints, I mean the Ever-Virgin. Mother of God! Even so we celebrate today her holy dormition or translation to another life, whereby, while being "a little lower than angels" (Ps. 8:6), by her proximity to the God of all, and in the wondrous deeds which from the beginning of time were written down and accomplished with respect to her, she has ascended incomparably higher than the angels and the archangels and all the super- celestial hosts that are found beyond them. For her sake the God- possessed prophets pronounce prophecies, miracles are wrought to foreshow that future Marvel of the whole world, the Ever-Virgin Mother of God. The flow of generations and circumstances journeys to the destination of that new mystery wrought in her; the statutes of the Spirit provide beforehand types of the future truth. The end, or rather the beginning and root, of those divine wonders and deeds is the annunciation to the supremely virtuous Joachim and Anna of what was to be accomplished: namely, that they who were barren from

youth would beget in deep old age her that would bring forth without seed Him that was timelessly begotten of God the Father before the ages. A vow was given by those who marvelously begot her to return her that was given to the Giver; so accordingly the Mother of God strangely changed her dwelling from the house of her father to the house of God while still an infant . She passed not a few years in the Holy of Holies itself, wherein under the care of an angel she enjoyed ineffable nourishment such as even Adam did not succeed in tasting; for indeed if he had, like this immaculate one, he would not have fallen away from life, even though it was because of Adam and so that she might prove to be his daughter, that she yielded a little to nature, as did her Son, Who has now ascended from earth into heaven. [...TRUNCATED FOR BREVITY...] O divine, and now heavenly, Virgin, how can I express all things which pertain to thee? How can I glorify the treasury of all glory? Merely thy memory sanctifies whoever keeps it, and a mere movement towards thee makes the mind more translucent, and thou dost exalt it straightway to the Divine. The eye of the intellect is through thee made limpid, and through thee the spirit of a man is illumined by the sojourning of the Spirit of God, since thou hast become the steward of the treasury of divine gifts and their vault, and this, not in order to keep them for thyself, but so that thou mightest make created nature replete with grace. Indeed, the steward of those inexhaustible treasures watches over them so that the riches may be dispensed; and what could confine that wealth which wanes not? Richly, therefore, bestow thy mercy and thy graces upon all thy people, this thine inheritance, O Lady! Dispel the perils which menace us. See how greatly we are expended by our own and by aliens, by those without and by those within. Uplift all by thy might: mollify our fellow citizens one with another and scatter those who assault us from without-like savage beasts. Measure out thy succor and healing in proportion to our passions, apportioning abundant grace to our souls and bodies, sufficient for every necessity. And although we may prove incapable of containing thy bounties, augment our capacity and in this manner bestow them upon us, so that being both saved and fortified by thy grace, we may glorify the pre-eternal Word Who was incarnate of thee for our sakes, together with His unoriginate Father and the life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto the endless ages. Amen.

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