



ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΘΥΑΤΕΙΡΩΝ & Μ. ΒΡΕΤΑΝΙΑΣ
ARCHDIOCESE OF THYATEIRA & GREAT BRITAIN

5, Craven Hill, London W2 3EN . Tel: 020-7723 4787 . Fax: 020-7224 9301
E-mail: mail@thyateira.org.uk . Website: www.thyateira.org.uk

To the Reverend Priests and Deacons, Honourable Chairmen and Members of the Committees of the Communities of the Holy Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain and Ireland.

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

Again, the love and friendship of God, who is worshipped in Trinity, has made us worthy of arriving at these holy and special days of the Feast of the Dormition - the death and the departure from this world - of the Mother of God.

According to Orthodox Christian tradition, we chant the Small and Great Supplication Services to the Mother of God from the first to the thirteenth of August. These Sacred Services are chanted with contrition, with deep faith in Christ and trust in His Holy Mother, who intercedes for the remission of our sins, for the cure of our illnesses, for the health of all pious Orthodox Christians, and for the stability of the Holy Churches of God, for the peace of the whole world, and the cessation of war and the reconciliation of those at war throughout the world, for the cooperation of the countries of Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia and the whole Planet which Humanity has as its dwelling, temporary home, and kingdom. Our minds respectfully and lovingly go our elderly brethren, our friends and our enemies. We fervently beseech the Virgin Mary, as a Mother to intercede on behalf of the children and the Youth so that they can overcome temptations, sins, the passion of drug addiction, and other criminal activities, that mar the 'image and likeness' that God created us with. The writers of the Supplication Service speak about the sorrows that ravage humanity. As the poet writes: "The onslaught of sorrows surrounds my humble soul and clouds of misfortunes cover my heart."

In recent days, Greece has hit by sorrow. Many brethren died a tragic through the force of a death bearing wind and raging and merciless fire. However, sorrows are a daily, personal and unavoidable reality for us all. As has been wisely said, we of us limp, and carry burdens that poison our personal, family, national, and church lives, and our integrity and happiness. That is why prayer helps us in a most amazing way to emerge victorious, healthy and unharmed, from our daily struggles with the demons and their friends. Wherever we look, we see pain, evil, sin, harshness, exploitation, bitterness, a watering down of love, and mental illness. The hymnographer very aptly says: "Sinners as we are, we have no other intercessor before God in dangers and in sorrows."

The Mother of God remains "the hope of all Christians". She is the joy of the oppressed, the Protectress of the wronged, and the Shelter of those who have been stricken by the pains of life. The 15th of August is the summer's Easter for us Orthodox Christians. Like the Holy Apostles, the death of the Virgin is an anticipation of the joy of the Resurrection, and so we call this day the Dormition of the Mother of God and we fast in prayer and beseech Virgin Mary for her help.

We too share in the death and have a foretaste of our Resurrection. That is why, especially during these days, we chant the Supplication Services in order to be consoled and to be reassured that the Virgin is listening, is quick to hear the sighs of our hearts, she accepts our tears and mediates for all of us, above and beyond our own personal situation. The Mother of God is "the Merciful and the Sweet-kissing, accepts our tears and intercede beseechingly for each and every one of us, over and above our own personal situation. The Mother of God is "the sweetness of the angels, the joy of the oppressed, the protectress of all Christians". She is the throne touched by the Sun, and the mystical Seat of Christ the King, praying mercifully, night and day, for the salvation of the human race and the prevalence of the Kingdom of the Great Shepherd, Christ, in the World. To him belongs the Kingdom, the power and infinite mercy unto the ages. Amen.

London, August 2018

Archbishop Gregorios
of Thyateira and Great Britain

Note: to be read from the Pulpit instead of a Sermon on Sunday 5 August 2018