PARACLESIS

Explanation of the Paraclesis
The word “paraclesis” has two different meanings: the first is “consolation,” from which the Holy Spirit is called the “Paraclete,” or “Consober”; the second is “supplication” or “petition”. The Service of the Paraclesis to the Theotokos consists of hymns of supplication to obtain consolation and courage. It should be recited in times of temptation, discouragement or sickness. It is used more particularly during the two weeks before the Dormition, or Assumption, of the Theotokos, from August 1 to August 14. The theme of these Paraclesis Services centers around the petition. “Most Holy Mother of God, save us.

If you have a problem or if something is burdening your soul, if you feel spiritually uneasy and if you are not at peace with yourself and with those around you, then, you should come to the Church during the first fifteen days of August and ask for the intercessions of the Mother of God. Even if you are fortunate enough to be one of those very few who are at peace with themselves and with God, then those blessed ones should come to these services and thank God and His Blessed Mother for the blessings that they have bestowed upon you and your family.

Since these Paraclesis Services to the Theotokos are primarily petition for the welfare of the living, let the whole Church pray for you during the first fifteen days of August and especially on the Great Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos on August 15th. Don’t let your laziness and your apathy cause you to miss this great blessing and inspiration that the Church can bestow upon you. Let the peace and holiness that only the Mother of God can give you enter into your life. “Let us lay aside all earthly cares,” and let us truly, during these fifteen days, participate in the fasting and prayer life of the Church so that we can “taste and see that the Lord is good” and so that we may fully experience the spiritual blessings that the Church.

Dates When the Small Paraclesis will be offered at St. Barbara
Friday, August 2nd at 6:30 pm
Wednesday, August 7th at 6:30 pm
Friday, August 9th at 6:30 pm
Monday, August 12th at 6:30 pm

Names for the Health and Well Being of Loved Ones are Submitted at the Service:
As noted above, the Paraklesis service is a supplication specifically for the wellbeing of the living. During the services, Father Stavroforos will commemorate the names of the living faithful for whom prayers have been asked. Accordingly, if you have family members, godparents, godchildren, friends, etc., who you would like to have commemorated at these services, please make a list of their names and provide it to Father.

The Reason We Fast for the Feast of the Dormition:
So why do we fast before Dormition? In a close-knit family, word that its matriarch is on her deathbed brings normal life to a halt. Otherwise important things (parties, TV, luxuries, personal desires) become unimportant; life comes to revolve around the dying matriarch. It is the same with the Orthodox family; word that our matriarch is on her deathbed, could not (or at least should not) have any different effect than the one just mentioned. The Church, through the Paraklesis Service, gives us the opportunity to come to that deathbed and eulogize and entreat the woman who bore God, the vessel of our salvation and our chief advocate at His divine throne. And as, in the earthly family, daily routines and the indulgence in personal wants should come to a halt. Fasting, in its full sense (abstaining from food and desires) accomplishes this. Less time in leisure or other pursuits leaves more time for prayer and reflection on the one who gave us Christ, and became the first and greatest Christian. In reflecting on her and her incomparable life, we see a model Christian life, embodying Christ’s retort to the woman who stated that Mary was blessed because she bore Him: blessed rather are those who hear His word and keep it. Mary did this better than anyone. As Fr. Thomas Hopko has stated, she heard the word of God and kept it so well, that she of all women in history was chosen not only to hear His Word but give birth to it (Him). So while we fast in contemplation of her life, we are simultaneously preparing ourselves to live a life in imitation of her. That is the purpose of the Dormition Fast.
Names for the Health and Well Being of Loved Ones
for the Paraclesis Services of August 1st to 15th

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