01/09/2021

His Eminence Metropolitan Savas' Archpastoral message for September (Church new year)



Loss and Hope

As we enter into a new ecclesiastical year, the observance of the Dormition of the Theotokos (Aug. 15) – the summer Pascha – is still fresh in our minds and in our hearts as the last major feast of the year that has passed. And the Nativity of the Theotokos (Sep. 8) is the first feast of the new year. The Virgin Mary's birth and death bookend the ecclesiastical year, enveloping the passage of time in her cycle of hope-filled loss and persistent faith.

Despite the challenges, Joachim and Anna and the Theotokos never lost sight of their hope in God. They knew the Lord did not promise them ease, and they did not ask for it—but instead they knew that if they remained faithful to Him by following His commandments in love, that He would manifest His power through them and give them the imperishable promise. The fruit of this faithfulness is then the centerpiece of the aforementioned feasts: the birth of a daughter to end Joachim & Anna's stigma who would also bring Hope Incarnate into the world, and the passage into an eternal Kingdom promised to all by the loving Lord and Son she bore.

Within the past year we all have experienced loss—the deaths of faithful priests

and dear loved ones, an increase in illnesses of both body and mind, instability in our economy and social structures, strife and enmity. We've passed milestones without fanfare, faced challenging transitions, and been confronted with our weaknesses both individually and as a body of believers.

For the coming year we should hold on to the same hope of the Theotokos, as we continue to endure the painful effects of the year that has passed: that despite the tribulations, strife, pain, and loss, our God will continue to guard and guide and love us, and our calling is to continue to strive toward His upward call in love, to serve one another out of reverence for Him, seeing that by remaining steadfast to Him in the tribulation, the promise is made to us as it was to His mother: that we will be translated unto life by His grace.

