15/08/2022

Message of Archbishop Makarios for the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos



Most honourable Brother Fellow Bishops and my beloved children,

Today, all Orthodox Christians reverently come before holy icons of the Most Holy Theotokos in order to venerate and honour the person who, like no other, has been identified with Life.

"*You, the Mother of Life himself, have passed on to immortal life by your most exalted Dormition,*" we hear chanted on this blessed day during the service of Matins.

These few words are enough to show us the reason why, today, "*all in heaven are jubilant*" and "*all on earth rejoice celebrating*", and why the Dormition of the Theotokos is indeed a feast and a glorious celebration and not mourning, sorrow and pain.

Our pious people, who harbour profound respect for the most holy person of the Theotokos, today experience deep-seated feelings of genuine joy for the fact that

Mary, the one full of Grace, was transported to the heavens, to her Son's Kingdom.

It is a joy of justification and validation but also a joy of hope for the human race. Joy of justification because the Mother of our Lord and God, and Mother of us all, although mortal like every human being on earth, tastes the divine gift of victory over death; the gift of eternal life.

And joy of hope because with her Dormition and departing "*the tomb has become a ladder leading to heaven*." She who cooperated in the Birth of the God-Man, uniting heaven and earth as a living ladder now, for the second time, is transformed into a noetic ladder, offering corruptible humanity the prospect of eternal and real life.

Truly, my dear brothers and sisters, with deep faith we seek refuge in our holy Panagia, daily, asking for her intercessions concerning our difficulties, trials and sorrows in this present life. At the same time, however, let us keep in our minds and hearts, the hope-filled message of today's great feast. And let us make it our aim to imitate the virtues of the Most Holy Theotokos in this present life so that we may be counted worthy to walk on that noetic ladder, which leads to the heavenly life.

Many blessed years!