

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



*Icon of the Dormition of the Theotokos*

## A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

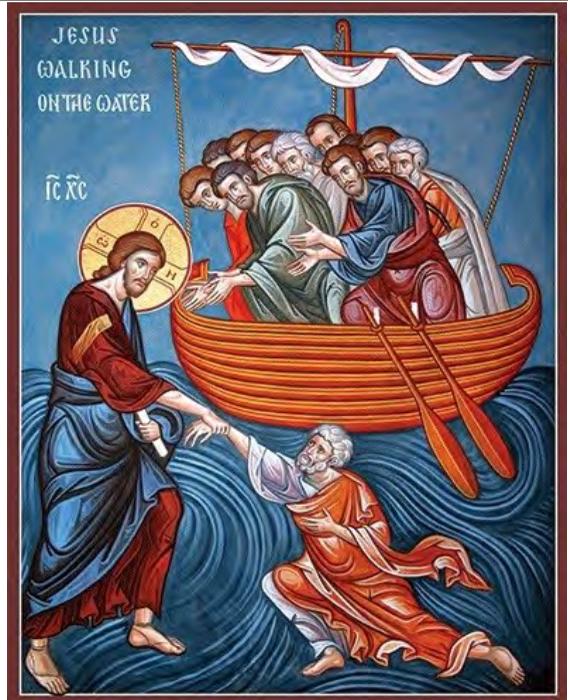
On this ninth weekend after Pentecost, our readings are taken from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and also Matthew's Gospel. St Paul exhorts us to think about ourselves as: *Temples of God's Spirit* and *God's co-workers*. Two very powerful images!

Each of us must ask ourselves: *How am I God's co-worker?* and *Do I see myself as a temple of God's Spirit?* It is my sincerest belief that if we try to honestly answer these two questions we will automatically grow a little more in God's likeness as seen in the Person of Jesus Christ. To think of ourselves in these two ways, makes a real difference.

If I am convinced that I am a co-worker with God, then I will do everything in my power to make His Kingdom real in the area where I work and live. It means living the way the Jesus inspired us to live, namely by *doing unto others as we would have others do unto us*. My response to my neighbor's interaction with me is always one of unconditional love.

Knowing that I am a temple of God's Spirit gives me the courage to act in this manner. He is with me, going through life with me and helping me to become God's co-worker.

The Gospel story that we hear is all about developing true TRUST and FAITH in God - in Jesus. He will never forsake us, even when the waves of life become a severe threat. He will be



there to help us stay afloat and not drown. It is all a matter of believing in His love for us.

I believe that these two reading go well together since if I have true TRUST and FAITH in God and believe that I am truly the temple of His Spirit, I can become His co-worker - I can give myself to the task of a *disciple* of Jesus and work to bring unconditional LOVE into my world.

Think about what might happen if we unconditionally loved others and did not make our response dependent upon their treatment of us? We would spiritually grow and we might have a real impact on others.

# SIGNS OF A DYNAMIC EASTERN CHRISTIAN

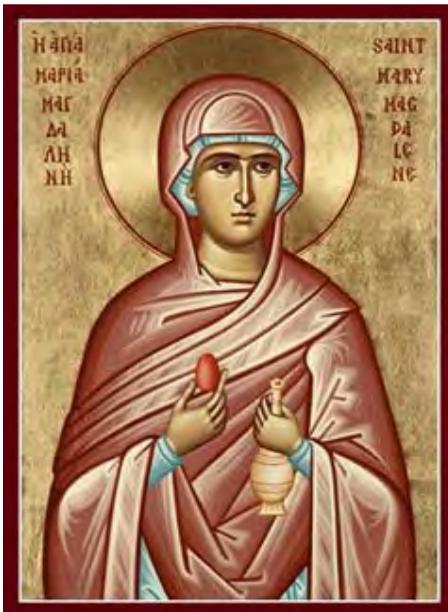
The things we do repeatedly determine our character and destiny. This is equally true for an athlete, a business leader, a parent or a Catholic. Life-giving spiritual habits are what set the 7% apart from the rest.

What do the Dynamic Catholics do that the other 93% tend not to do? First, they seem to fortify their connection and relationship with God every day by “praying.” Praying each day, however, does not make them perfect. It is, however, a beginning.

It is true that the 7% do things that discourage others from becoming more engaged. They can be territorial, excluding others from joining groups or activities. They often speak in a “church language” that the 93% don’t understand. They suffer from what can be called spiritual amnesia, meaning that they have forgotten or block out how resistant to God they were at different times in their spiritual journey - how far from God they have been at times in their lives. This spiritual amnesia robs them of the ability to relate to others who are less engaged.

Whatever shortcomings the 7% have can be overcome if they engage in (1) daily prayer, (2) study, (3) generosity, (4) evangelization, (5) development of a healthy idea (image or mental representation) of God, (6) a real rejection of society’s values, and (7) a true and honest commitment to *Theosis*. Just as God, according to Genesis, created the world in 7 days, these are seven ways that we can recreate ourselves into “dynamic” Christians.

**Daily prayer** is a sign that we believe that God is “not distant” from us but, rather, lives within us through His Life and Spirit. Do I really believe that God is within me? If I do, then I

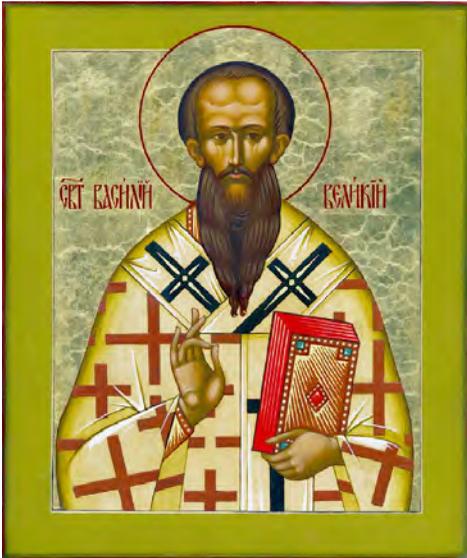


## ST. MARY MAGDALENE

will daily communicate with Him. It might just mean, at times, a “recognition” that I am a “TEMPLE” of God’s Spirit and that He has chosen, from all eternity, to have a close relationship with me. I pray each day because I recognize that He desires to have a relationship with me and constantly calls me, with love, to recognize His presence.

Prayer can take many different forms. When we feel dry, we can recite memorized prayers. We can just think about Him for moments at a time. We can just sit and be with Him. *What do you think?*

## ST BASIL'S THOUGHTS ON GENESIS



### ST BASIL THE GREAT

It is my hope that by sharing St. Basil's ideas about Genesis my readers will come to a deeper and realistic understanding of this Old Testament book. It is not meant to be a "history" of the creation of the world.

I ended the last issue by sharing that the "image" which is spoken about in the creation of humankind was not a reminder of an absent deity so much as the deity was *present through its image*. That is why kings in that culture set up statues of themselves where they wanted to establish their authority.

We can see now what it meant for God to declare that

He would create Man in His image - Man (in Hebrew *adam*), both male and female, partook of God's authority. Man, both male and female, would rule the earth as God's vice-regents, exercising the authority of the heavenly God as His stewards on earth. The bestowal of image referred not to any interior endowment, such as free will, the capacity for self-transcendence, or reason, though of course such endowments could be presupposed in anyone tasked with being His image on earth. The bestowal of the divine image was a gift of authority, which is why God immediately added that Man must rule over the fish and the birds and the cattle and indeed over all the earth. Ruling was how Man fulfilled his role as one created in the divine image. So, as soon as Man was created, God told him not only to be **fruitful and multiply**, but also to **rule**.

This was an astonishing notion in the ancient world and quite revolutionary. In the pagan creation stories, the gods made men to be their servants, to feed them and to do the work they had tired of doing. Men were created to feed their gods with sacrifices, to keep and clean their temple homes, to till the fields the gods no longer want to till. *Kings* might be described as being in the image of the gods and partaking of their authority, but not the average laboring *man* - and certainly not the average laboring *woman*. Yet the Genesis story declared that every man and woman in the field and by the mill was created to rule the earth in God's name and partake of His authority.

*Does this make you think differently about Genesis?*

# St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



## DORMITION FEAST

*Thursday, August 15th*

This coming Thursday we will celebrate the Feast of the Dormition (i.e., Falling Asleep) of Mary, the Mother of God. In the West it is called the Assumption. It celebrates our belief that Mary was taken into Heaven - the next world - bodily. She did not endure the ordinary corruption of the grave. Why? Because she had given herself completely to the will of God - she voluntarily became the mother of the human person, Jesus, the Christ.

Keep this day holy. We will celebrate this feast on the weekend with the blessing of flowers. I am not having an evening Liturgy on this feast because it is close to the weekend and we shall celebrate it as a community on the weekend. Make the day special, however, by prayers to the Mother of God, Mary.

***Choosing to be positive and having a grateful attitude is going to determine how you're going to live your life***

## A CALL TO HOLINESS

So after all is said and done, what do you think the "call to holiness" is about? It has so many dimensions, I believe. I believe that first and foremost it is all about truly accepting ourselves as God's creation and seeing that the entire experience of this earthly life is about "growing" and "changing" so that we might become more like Jesus, the model of who human beings are to be like.



Indeed earthly life presents multiple opportunities for human growth. Think about it: we are constantly being challenges to learn how to unconditionally love other human beings so that we might be able to truly return God's unconditional love for us. God offers us unconditional love which can only be experienced through our ability to "return unconditional love." We learn this through our experience of other human beings. When we decide that we will not allow the behavior of others to dictate how we will behave, we are on the road to learning how to unconditionally love and forgive - the two main lessons that this present life is attempting to teach us.

It means getting over self-centeredness and narcissism! It means learning how to think about others

*(Continued on page 8)*

## INQUIRING MINDS: QUESTIONS FROM READERS

I had the great honor of receiving a very insightful question from one of my readers which pertains to God as Trinity.

The question is:

Why is Jesus called ‘the only-begotten’ and not the Holy Spirit as well? Don’t they both proceed equally from the Father? Wasn’t that the point of the *filioque* question?

The phrase “only-begotten” Son” occurs in John 3:16 and now appears not only in our Divine Liturgy and in our Creed. This originally was in the King James Version. In newer translations the words are “his only Son.” The phrase “only-begotten” translates the Greek word *monogenes*. Scholars have argued that the compound Greek adjective is not derived from *monos* (only) + *gennao* (beget) but from *monos* (only) + *genos* (kind). Thus, they argue, the term shouldn’t be translated “only begotten” but “only one of his kind” or “unique”. This is one reason why newer translations only use the term “only”.

If, however, you search the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* - a comprehensive database of ancient, Koine and medieval Greek - reveals that the word *monogenes* is used most basically and frequently in contexts having to do with biological offspring. Its fundamental meaning is “only begotten” or “only child” in the sense of having no siblings. This biological usage can be seen in the instances of *monogenes* in non-Christological contexts in the New Testament (NT). Three times Luke uses *monogenes* to describe various “only



begottens” whom Jesus healed: “the only son” of the widow of Nain; the “only daughter” of Jarius; and the demon-oppressed boy whose father pleaded, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child.”

It must be acknowledged that there are indeed instances where a translation such as “only,” “only one of its kind,” or “unique” is required by the context. For example, Clement calls the phoenix, a creature he thought really existed, “unique”. An ancient treatise describes trees that exist in “only one kind.”

*Will continue the answer to this question in the next issue!*

## THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL: NICAEA (325)

Hopefully you, my readers, have been able to discern that the struggle that the Church was confronted with was: *Who is Jesus?* If He is truly God incarnate as a human being, what does that say about God? So in order to settle the Church's understanding of who Christ is, she had to understand who God is. They had to maintain "monotheism" because they sprang from Judaism and it made more sense. God is ONE. So how can He also take on human nature in the Person of Jesus, the Christ? This was truly monumental struggle. Jesus, while He was a prophet, was more than a prophet. PLUS, He rose from the dead. So, Who Is He? This is the struggle the early Church had to deal with.

As I have tried to demonstrate, there were many different ideas floating around for many years with regards who Jesus is. We believe, however, that the Holy Spirit was guiding the church to come to a real understanding of Who Jesus Is. The Church, however, had to go through the struggle in order to grow in its understanding of God and Jesus.

Where I got to in the last issue of this article, was the fact that some had come to the struggle with those who believed as the "Homoians" believed (the Son Jesus is only "like" the Father and not truly equal to the Father).

One group who strongly opposed the Homoian radicals and the whole



Homoian project of trying to prevent the use of 'essence' language, focused around Basil of Ancyra. His theological approach claimed the Dedication creed as its own ancestor and described the Son as 'like the Father according to essence'. These people rapidly became known as *Homoiousians*. Although the number of bishops we can clearly identify with this group is small, there are occasions on which many seemed to have been sympathetic to their approach, perhaps because they seemed attentive to some of the themes of what has been referred to as the broad eastern tradition. Indeed, we have to be careful throughout this period of speaking about 'ecclesiastical parties' without always bearing in mind that these groups were very fluid, unstructured, and may have got *ad hoc* support from those whose thought cannot easily be tied clearly to one or other trajectory.

Again, just as in life, the struggle is what brings about true truth and faith.

# Schedule of Services

St. Michael the Archangel  
Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church  
6340 Chase Road  
Dearborn, MI 48126

Rev. Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.  
Pastor

Rectory: (313) 582-1424  
Cell: (313) 580-4412  
WRuchgy@gmail.com

## LITURGY SCHEDULE

**Sundays @ 10:00 AM**  
Ukrainian & English

**Weekdays @ 8:00 AM**  
English

## SACRAMENTS

### **Penance**

*By Appointment*

### **Baptism & Matrimony**

*In most instances membership  
required for six months*

### **Funerals**

*Membership of an immediate family  
member required*

## Parish Life Council

Bob & Corinne Boyko  
734.451.1893

John & Janet Dicky  
586.755.3129

Daria Drobny  
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky  
248.431.9554

Leo & Mary LaDouceur  
313.278.7378

Gordon Malaniak  
734.564.9817

Leonard Mier  
313.584-6795

Greg & Esther Petrovich  
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter  
313.624.9867

**Sunday, August 11 - Ninth Weekend After Pentecost - TONE 8**  
**10:00 AM - Walter Boyko; Bob & Corinne Boyko**

## **TENTH WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 1**

Monday, August 12 - Photius & Anicetus, Martyrs  
No Service Scheduled

**Tuesday, August 13 - Maximus the Confessor, Venerable**  
**8:00 AM - Special Intention**

Wednesday, August 14 - Translation of Theodosius' Relics  
No Service Scheduled

**Thursday, August 15 - Feast of the Dormition of Mary**  
**8:00 AM - Special Intention**

Friday, August 16 - Translation of the Icon of Our Lord  
No Service Scheduled

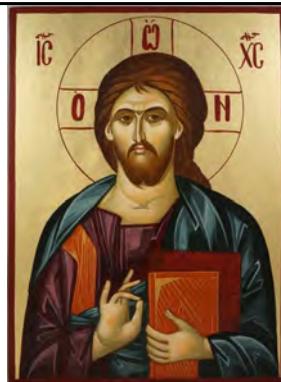
Saturday, August 17 - Myron, Martyr  
No Service Scheduled

**Sunday, August 18 - Tenth Weekend After Pentecost - TONE 1**  
**10:00 AM - Enrollment of Michael Blumenau in the Church**

*(Continued from page 5 - the Call to holiness)*

before ourselves.

This, of course, flies in the face of our society's approach to life. Our society tells us to think first of ourselves so that we might not be used or abused. We are truly in a "ME-FIRST" society. We think not what happens to others so that we can get what we want. Our society has truly become self-centered and selfish. Is this the message that God has sent to us through the Person of Jesus? I would hope that my readers unanimously shout in the quiet of their homes: NO. Jesus taught "love of neighbor" and "service to others" as the primary tasks of human life. This way of living leads to personal transformation and spiritual growth. ***What are your thoughts?***



<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org> - and - [Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

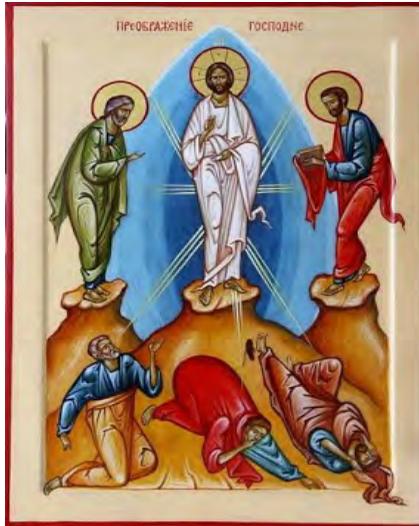
## THIS IS MY BELOVED SON

I ended the last installment of this article by sharing the author's belief that the Transfiguration communicates something more unexpected, something less embedded to our cultural acceptance of Christianity and something that provokes a reading at a deeper, and yet more direct, level. It resonates in many ways with what we hear sometimes from elderly monks and charismatic laypeople, about a different kind of recognition of the presence of God, a more palpable way - even when the light is so dazzling that you cannot know what it is that you are sensing. There is something immediate about this story, something that draws us inside of it, at the foot or on the top of Mount Tabor, where we can see Christ change into his real form, the form of light. Words cannot fully express the experience. I know, says the author, that the last thing I would need to do after such an event is to systematize it, classify it, or analyze it philosophically and theologically - at least if *theology* means what it usually means in our days. Yet, as with most experiences that lie beyond the level of the ordinary, we inevitably return to the

words, to that part of thought that likes black to be black, and a table to be a table, and does not register easily that for which it does not have a word.

But then, we occasionally see a glow in the faces of some people that betrays an inner sense, a spiritual way to touch, see and hear. This glow, humble and rare as it may be, does not appear only in the serene faces of the saints in iconography. It can be seen, more frequently, in elderly people who have seen much of life and have become more and more clear about the meaning and purpose of life.

It is important to note that we cannot understand the glory of

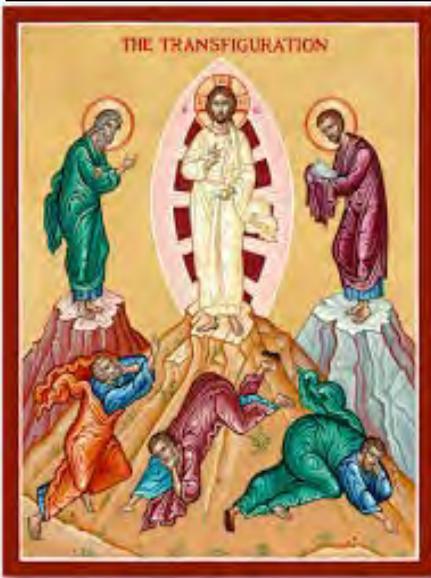


### THE TRANSFIGURATION

the Transfiguration or Resurrection if we have not made the Cross part of our own life. Similarly, the command of Jesus to the disciples to keep their experience silent until after they had known him as the crucified and resurrected God implies that the mystery of the Transfiguration cannot be approached as an inert object of story from the outside, without reverence, without fear, and without trembling. "Such things" are not spoken of lightly.

*More to come!*

## UNDERSTANDING THEOSIS - DEIFICATION



I have been sharing Maximus the Confessor's ideas about "divinization" and "spiritual progress." The Confessor's deepest conviction has "God providing equally to all the power that naturally leads to salvation, so that each one who wishes can be transformed by divine grace." This again highlights the thought that human salvation is a cooperative effort between God and man. It is not something that God does to us humans but, rather, is something that results when we, humans, cooperate with God. The appropriation of divinization is in direct correlation with one's degree

of spiritual appreciation and discernment. By realizing his or her natural freedom, the human being

Might become a child of God and divine by grace through the Spirit. For a created human could not be revealed as a child of God through deification by grace without first being born by the Spirit in the exercise of free choice, because of the power of self-movement and self-determination inherent in human nature.

Hence, in Maximus' view, God will recognize and divinize His own, that is, those who willfully employ their true nature. An intense yearning for relationship with the Creator, as well as an ability to fulfill it, was bestowed upon the human race by God Himself, who ever moves His creation toward its end in Himself: "He sets in movement in us an insatiable desire for Himself Who is the Bread of Life, wisdom, knowledge and justice. Unceasingly, God transposes willing humanity "from the lower to the greater," "from glory to glory", to divinization:

He leads us finally in the supreme ascent in divine realities to the Father of lights wherein he makes us sharers in the divine nature by participating in the grace of the Spirit, through which we receive the title of God's children and become clothed entirely with the complete person who is the author of this grace, without limiting or defiling him who is Son of God by nature.

According to know God is to seek His face without ceasing, to attain progressively to the divine vision which penetrates the luminous darkness.

So, Maximus sees human salvation through the idea of a active, cooperate action between God and man.

*What say you?*



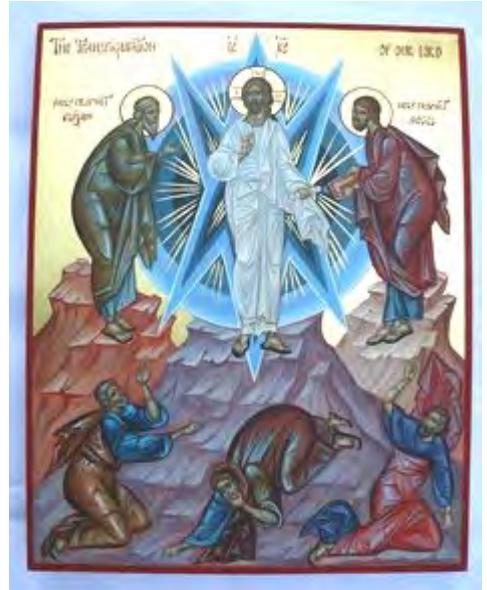
# THE EASTERN HERALD

## СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.  
Vol. 65 No 32 THE NINTH WEEKEND AFTER PENTECOST August 10-11, 2019

### THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

One of the most divisive issues between the East and West has been the problem of human freedom with regard to salvation. All theological traditions agree on two premises: on the one hand, human beings are given relative freedom as a result of being created in God's image; on the other hand, human freedom at its best is relative, since human beings are not autonomous and their use of will is marred by the existence of sin, that is we humans are limited by our natures which don't totally comprehend the meaning and purpose of life and that we are broken and weak and do many stupid things. We are not infallible. We make many mistakes. That's part of what it means to be human (*By the way, God does not see that as bad. He created us in this fashion because He saw that it could lead to our free return of His love*). Divergences begin here. Eastern theology insists on the freedom of will and Catholic theology basically agrees, as do most post-Reformation theologies such as Methodism and Pentecostalism. Eastern theology regards freedom as belonging to the constitution of human beings. The Lutheran doctrine, in its vehement opposition to what it saw as the pitfall of the Catholic view, practically speaking came to deny the whole concept of human freedom with regard to salvation. Reformation theologians have also



### THE TRANSFIGURATION

accused Eastern theology of two cardinal errors: free will and *synergia*. Interestingly enough, the same accusations are usually leveled against Free Church soteriologies. For example, Pentecostal sources freely speak about the role of the human will." Some believe that the Pentecostal doctrine of sanctification "is clearly synergistic."

***More to follow!***

### *Explanation to the Emperor*

There is nothing in the holy, inspired Scripture about the death of Mary, the holy Mother of God. But we know from ancient and wholly reliable tradition that at the time she so gloriously fell asleep, all the holy Apostles, who were traveling the world for the salvation of the peoples, were lifted up in a single instant of time and were gathered at Jerusalem; and as they stood by her, they saw a vision of angels, and heard the divine chanting of the higher powers ... Her body, which had been God's dwelling place, was brought for burial amidst the singing of the angels and the Apostles, and laid to rest in a coffin in Gethsemane; and the angelic dancing and singing continued without pause in that place for three days. But after three days, the song of the angels ceased; the Apostles were there, and since one of them, Thomas, had not been present (for her burial and came at the end of three days) and

wished to reverence that body which had housed God, they opened the coffin. And they could not find her body, which had been the object of such praise; all that they found were her burial wrappings. And being overcome by the ineffable fragrance that came out of the wrappings, they closed the coffin again. Amazed by this miraculous discovery, they could only draw a single conclusion: the one Who had deigned to become flesh in her own person, and to take His humanity from her, the one Who willed to be born in human flesh as God the Word, the Lord of glory, and Who had preserved her virginity intact even after childbirth, now chose, after her departure from this world, to honor her immaculate and pure body with the gift of incorruptibility, and with a change of state even before the common, universal resurrection.

*St. Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem*