

My Beloved Ones,

When our Lord entrusted the care of His mother to John the Beloved Disciple, she followed John to minister to the Church in Ephesus, before returning to Jerusalem, where she also supported the early Christians with love and wisdom.

Just as an angel foretold Christ's Incarnation at the Annunciation, when the time came for her Dormition, the Theotokos was again greeted by a heavenly messenger. Filled with joy knowing that she would see her Son and her God, she went to pray at the Mount of Olives. When she returned home, the power of the Holy Spirit brought to her all the Apostles, who were then preaching throughout the world. The Apostles did not understand the reason they had come together, but they were sad when they saw the Theotokos on her deathbed. Mary consoled them, praying for the peace of the world, and offered her spirit to God, just as she had offered her life.



The circumstances of her burial—how she was discovered to have been taken bodily into heaven—are known to Orthodox Christians. Indeed, they point the way to the Resurrection of the Dead: we must pass from this world to the next, but Mary was given a foretaste of how we shall all be raised bodily to life, when we stand before Christ.

My brothers and sisters, as we prepare to celebrate the Feast, I ask you to think of two important lessons our beloved Mother has taught us: to put God and the concerns of others before our own lives. She was greeted by angels both at the Annunciation, and before her Dormition; and both times, she accepted the Will of God, as should we all, if we are to live in Communion with Him.

As we continue to live through a pandemic which has changed how we live, work and worship, we are blessed to have in our Ever-Virgin Mary a loving Mother, who—despite our own physical distance from her heavenly dwelling place—hears our cries, and always seeks to intercede on behalf of all her spiritual children. May we continue to speak to her, as we seek to grow closer to her, the saints, and her Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

+ALEXIOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta