

## Major Events in the Post-Dormition Life of the Theotokos

- May 8: Stephen of Corfu was unjustly blinded as punishment for theft. After much prayer before the Icon of the Theotokos at Kassiope, the Theotokos appeared and healed Stephen.
- May 13: Gabriel, a priest-monk at the Iveron Monastery on Athos retrieved the wonder-working Portraitissa Icon of the Theotokos from the sea, where the icon was transported to that location by a pillar of fire.
- May 11: Consecration of Constantinople to the Theotokos.
  - 626 AD: The Theotokos saved Constantinople from the Avars by an intense hailstorm. This brought about the first use of the Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos.
  - 716-717 AD: Caliph Suleiman laid siege to Constantinople for many months. With the help of the Theotokos, all the Arab ships were sunk and the city was saved. Meanwhile the Bulgarians massacred the weakened Arab armies.
  - 860 AD: While the Emperor and the army was away warding off the Arabs, the Russians attacked using 200 ships. Patriarch Photios and a procession of the saints carried the garment of the Theotokos along the city walls, and the Russians turned and ran away. Following this, Patriarch Photios Christianized the pagan Russians.
- June 11, 980 AD: In a hermitage near the Monastery of Pantocrator on Mt Athos, the Archangel Gabriel appeared dressed as a simple monk. Before the Icon of the Theotokos called “The Queen of Heaven”, which depicts two angels holding her crown, Gabriel chanted “It is truly meet” as an introduction to the hymn to the Theotokos “More honorable than the cherubim”. The priest-monk present asked Gabriel to write down what he had just chanted; Gabriel proceeded to carve these words into a blank piece of slate. The piece of slate was taken to Constantinople for veneration and the additional words of Gabriel have been included in this hymn ever since.
- June 20, 1730: Synaxis of the Hodegetria Icon of the Theotokos. This icon was located in the Vatopedi Monastery on Mt Athos dedicated to the Annunciation, but it disappeared despite locked doors on this date. Not long afterward, the icon was discovered in the Xenophontos Monastery nearby on Athos. The monks of Vatopedi brought the icon back to its usual place, but the icon left again a few hours later. Today the icon remains at Xenophontos, but the brethren at Vatopedi visit to reverence the icon periodically.
- August 22: Synaxis of the Prousiotissa Icon of the Theotokos. This icon is generally believed to have been written by the Evangelist Luke. During the iconoclast controversy, the icon was taken by a young man from its place in Kallipolis, Greece for safekeeping, but he mysteriously lost the icon. A few years later some shepherds found the icon in a cave in a very remote part of Greece. The young man who lost the icon eventually heard about this and journeyed there, spending the rest of his life in a chapel built for the icon.
- August 31: Synaxis of the Consecration of the Temple of the Theotokos at Neorion. This temple had been denuded of icons by the iconoclasts. Following the Iconoclast controversy, the temple, which had become run-down, was restored and many miracles occurred there that were attributed to the Theotokos.
- September 24, 1160: Finding the Icon of the Theotokos in Myrtle Trees on Kythera. A pious Christian was directed by a vision he had while sleeping to go to the island of

Kythera. On Kythera, a voice directed him to find the icon among some myrtle trees. He built a small Church dedicated to the Theotokos and lived the rest of his life in a small cell next to the Church. After his repose, the small Church was enlarged and a complete monastery was built, and many healings and wonders have occurred at this place.

- October 1, 473 AD: Feast of the Protection of the Theotokos. St Andrew, the fool for Christ, and his disciple Epiphanius were attending an all-night vigil, when they both saw the Theotokos descend, borne by angels and accompanied by Ss John the Forerunner and John the Theologian. She shone as the sun and kneeled down and prayed to her Son for a long time for the salvation of the faithful. She then entered the sanctuary, took her veil from the reliquary case, put it on her head, then rose up and spread her veil over all the faithful who were present. This event has been commemorated as a feast day ever since.
- October 1, 1664: Synaxis of the Icon of the Theotokos called "Quick to Hear". This icon was written during the 11<sup>th</sup> century and was enclosed by the Athonite monastery of Docheiariou. One of the priest-monks who cared for the icon was told by the icon not to carry a torch past the icon to avoid dirtying the icon, but he ignored this. The next time he passed by the icon with a torch, the icon reproached him again for his irreverence and he was blinded. Fear and trembling seized all the other monks, and they installed a vigil lamp next to the icon. The blinded monk remained in a prayer stall opposite the icon for weeks imploring the Theotokos to pardon and heal him, which she eventually did. Monks from all over Athos came to venerate this icon.