



## On the Dormition of Mary: Early Patristic Homilies

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Since the time of the early Church, Orthodox Christians have honored Mary, the Mother of God, with special solemnity on August 15. From the sixth century on, that celebration has been explicitly associated with her death, as the culmination of a human life uniquely "full of grace," uniquely involved in the Mystery of our salvation and transformation in Christ. This volume brings together the earliest attempts by Greek theologians and preachers to interpret Mary's Dormition, or 'falling asleep' in the Lord, in the light of the whole Paschal Mystery. The collection includes the sermon of Bishop John of Thessalonica, the earliest "official" retelling by an Orthodox bishop of the traditional narrative of Mary's entry into heavenly glory, and eleven other homilies from the seventh and eighth centuries, as well as a metrical translations of St John of Damascus' canon for the feast. All of the works gathered here represent profound and original efforts to integrate the celebration of Mary's death into the wider context of the Christian theology of redemption. Most of these works have never been translated into English before, and some are not available in any modern language. They offer Christian readers of all Churches an unparalleled new glimpse of Mary's central importance in Christian faith and spirituality: as the one in whom God's Word has become human, and in whom the community of Jesus' disciples sees the first full realization of its own share in the risen life of Christ. In the event and the liturgical celebration of her Dormition, these ancient preachers offer to us a kind of icon of Christian hope for the transfiguration of our common humanity, both at the time of our own "falling asleep" and at the end of history. On the Dormition of Mary is part of the POPULAR PATRISTIC SERIES.

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