

August 15th — The Dormition of the Theotokos and the Blessing of Flowers It is the tradition of the Italo-Greek Church that HERBS, rather than flowers, be brought by the parishioners for a special blessing on this day.

August 16th — The Translation of the Icon of Our Lord This feast commemorates those certain legends regarding the actual images of Christ. There are at least three that are known in the Church: Veronica's Veil, the Shroud of Turin, and the towel of Prince Abgar. The uniqueness of these images is that they were NOT made with human hands. With regard to Veronica's veil, sadly, we do not know the true name of the woman who cleaned the Face of Christ as he proceeded to His Death. Through time she was given the name "Veronica", as the name was derived from Latin "vera" (true) and the Greek "Eikon" (image). The woman who came to be known as "Veronica" traveled to Rome and delivered the cloth to the Church. Because other images were circulating at the time, the one in Rome became known as the "true image." The veil used to clean His Face had the picture of Christ's face and is now in Rome. With regard to the Shroud of Turin – again, another image of the body of Christ – was also produced without human hands and is said to be the impression of Christ when He was wrapped in the burial cloths. The other image came from the time Our Lord preached and was healing illnesses and infirmities. There lived in the city of Edessa, on the shore of the Euphrates, Prince Abgar who was stricken with leprosy. He heard of Christ and sent an artist, Ananias, to Palestine with a letter to Christ, begging Him to come to Edessa and to cure him. If He was unable to come, he asked the artist to draw a sketch of Him, thinking that if he touched the sketch, it may cure him. Christ was unable to come. However, He wiped His face on a towel on which His face was perfectly pictured, with the message that the prince would be healed by it, but not entirely. Later on, He would send a messenger who would erase the balance of his disease. Receiving the towel, the prince was cured of all but the leprosy on his face. Later, the Apostle Thaddaeus, came to Abgar and secretly healed and baptized him. The prince placed that towel, encased with wood and pearls, over the gates of the City. Later, his grandson returned to idolatry, and the Bishop of Edessa came under cloak of night and sealed the icon over the gates within a wall. Centuries passed. During the reign of Justinian, the Persian King Chozroes attacked Edessa and the city was in great hardship. Eulabius, the then Bishop, had a vision of the Holy Theotokos, who revealed to him the location of the icon. It was re-discovered and, by its power, the Persian army was defeated.