

This Feast shows us firstly that the human and divine natures of Christ are united in One Person, secondly that therefore there is no unity without the Holy Spirit, and thirdly that our Saviour is Lord over Life and Death, for Moses, who died, worships Him, and Elijah, who did not die, also worships Him.

Today, however, I would like to point out an aspect of this Feast which is often overlooked: Mt Tabor, the 'mountain' where the Transfiguration occurred. This Mt Tabor is for us a figure of repentance. We note that, like the disciples, in order for us to see the transfiguration or to hope to be transfigured ourselves, we will first have to climb up, to mount, from our present condition. Otherwise any transfiguration or change for the better in our lives is impossible.

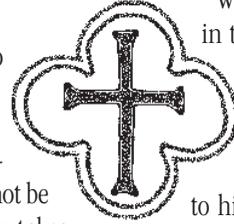
Now it is interesting that pilgrims who have been blessed to go to Mt Tabor and their photographs show us that Mt Tabor is not a mountain at all. It is rather a long, sloping hill with many obstacles, rocks and boulders, in the path of those who ascend it. And our transfiguration or salvation is like Mt Tabor. However hard we try, we will not be guaranteed salvation through a swift if arduous climb today. Salvation takes a lifetime, it is a long climb up a long slope, which is why the Lord gives most of us so long to live. Salvation is a long struggle which requires determination and perseverance, patient long-suffering.

Our spiritual progress is then not sudden and dramatic. And there are many obstacles in our path in our daily struggle. To pick up our prayerbooks in the morning and again in the evening is a struggle and there are always obstacles in our path to even this: meals to prepare, trains to catch, phones that ring. Church life is indeed made up of little sacrifices, obstacles overcome. There are prayers to say, fasts to be kept, a donation to be made, the washing-up to be done, flowers bought, the church cleaned, a choir rehearsal to go to, a vigil service to attend, a confession prepared.

As we come now towards the end of the Church's Year, we may well ask ourselves what the little sacrifices we have made since this Feast last year are. How far have we ascended up our own Mt Tabor? How have we changed over this last year? What have we done to lead a better life since then? How have we improved? What have we given God that we did not give Him before? It is this that we call progress: in what way am I a better Orthodox Christian than a year ago?

In our faith we are called to struggle daily, whatever the rocks or boulders in our way, whether they are pride or selfishness, lust or discouragement, envy or judging of others, we have to struggle to ascend our personal Mt Tabor, we have to fight for our personal transfiguration. That is why it is so important to come to confession and communion.

If we do not do this, then the Church will move away from us. For we can both go up and go down a slope. We can spiritually progress, but we can also spiritually regress. We can be transfigured by the love of God or we can be



disfigured by the love of sin. And like progress, regress is not sudden and dramatic, regress too is a slope, as we say, a slippery slope.

Let us therefore take heed and give God what He really wants from us - our hearts and minds spiritually progressing.

Amen.

<http://orthodoxengland.org.uk/sermtran.htm>

THE PERSON WHO BELONGS TO CHRIST TURNS EVERYTHING INTO PRAYER

"We should refer all our problems, whatever they are, to God, just as we say in the Divine Liturgy that we 'commend our whole life to Christ, our God.'

We leave everything to You, O Lord. Whatever you will. Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)

"The person who belongs to Christ turns everything into prayer. He makes both difficulties and tribulations into prayer. Whatever happens to him, he begins, 'Lord Jesus Christ. . .' Prayer is beneficial for everything, even for the simplest of things. For example, if you are suffering from insomnia, don't think about sleep. Get up and leave your bedroom and then come back in and lie down on your bed as if for the first time, without thinking about whether you will sleep or not. Then concentrate your mind, recite the doxology and then repeat the prayer, 'Lord Jesus Christ. . .', three times over and that way you will fall asleep.

"All matters are sorted out with prayer. But your prayer must be endued with love and fire. You mustn't have anxiety, but trust in God's love and providence. All things are embraced in spiritual life. All things are sanctified, both the good things and the difficult things, the material and the spiritual, and whatever you do, do for the glory of God. Saint Paul says, Whether you eat or whether you drink, whatever you do, do for the glory of God (I Corinthians 10:31). When you are at prayer, all things happen as they should. For example, you wash the dishes and you don't break any. The grace of God enters within you. When you have the grace of God, everything is done with joy and without pain.

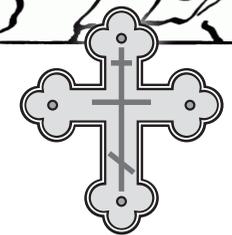
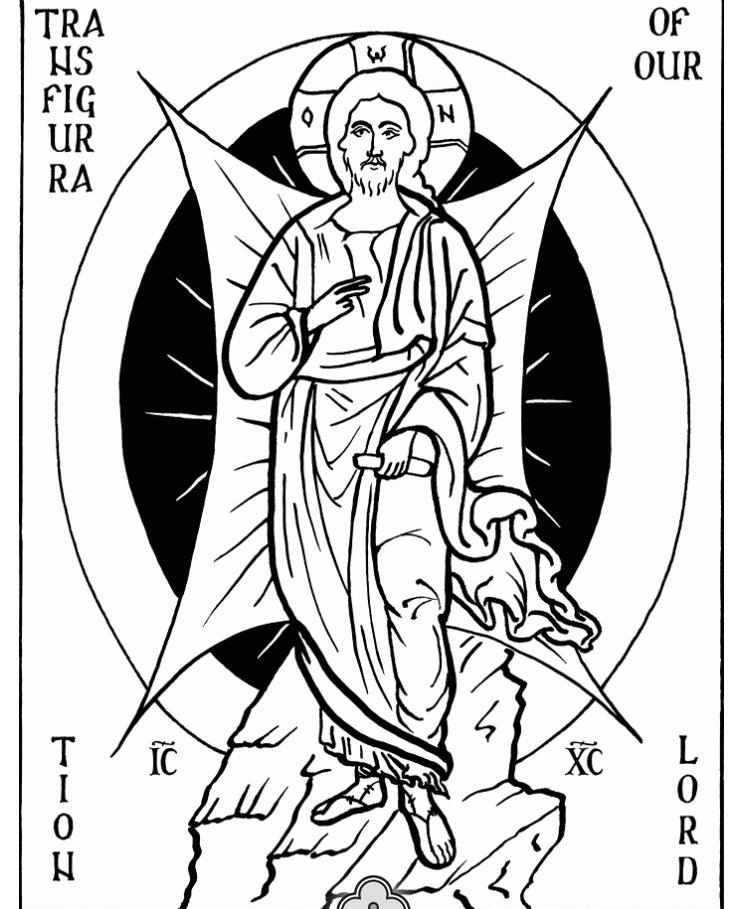
"When we pray continually, God will enlighten us as to what we must do in each situation, even the most difficult. God will speak in our heart. He will find ways. Of course, we can combine prayer with fasting. That is, when we are faced with a serious problem or dilemma, we should approach it with much prayer and fasting. That's how I have dealt with things often.

"When we want to ask things for other people, we should ask for them secretly, with prayer which is in secret and does not appear outwardly. Worry and distraction do not help prayer. Forget about telephone calls, communications and long conversations with people. If the Lord doesn't assist, what will our own efforts achieve? So what is required is prayer, prayer with love. It is preferable for us to help people from a distance with prayer. In that way we help them in the best and most perfect manner."

— St. Porphyrios. *Wounded By Love*, pp. 130-131

SS. Constantine and Elena Orthodox Church

August 6, 2017



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PARISH LIFE

AUGUST 1-14 DORMITION FAST

SUNDAY, AUGUST 6, 2017: FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

(FISH ALLOWED) (FESTAL TONES AND READINGS)

- 8:30 am Festal Matins
- 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
- 12:00 pm Blessing of grapes and fruits, after the Liturgy

MONDAY, AUGUST 7TH:

- 6:30 pm Paraclesis Service

TUESDAY, AUGUST 8TH:

- 6:30 pm Paraclesis Service

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9TH

- 6:00 pm Paraclesis Service
(before book study—note earlier start)
- 7:00 pm Special Study: the Transfiguration

THURSDAY, AUGUST 10TH:

- 6:30 pm Paraclesis Service

FRIDAY, AUGUST 11TH:

- 6:30 pm Paraclesis Service

SATURDAY AUGUST 12TH:

- 5:00 pm Mystery of Confession (by appointment please)
- 6:00 pm Great Vespers (followed by confessions)

PRAY FOR THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND OF OUR PARISH:

Victor Cosgarea, Jay Hanko, Jan Isham, Zachary Waltz and Margaret Wey.

LOOKING AHEAD...

Next Sunday's readings (10th Sunday after Pentecost): I Corinthians 4:9-16; Matthew 17:14-23.

Monday, August 14

- 6:30 pm Vigil for Dormition

Tuesday, August 15

- 8:00 am Divine Liturgy for Dormition (with Academy students)

Sunday, August 20th:

- 12:00 pm Annual Post-Dormition Picnic

HYMNS FOR THE TRANSFIGURATION (USED THROUGH AUGUST 13)

Tropar (Tone 7)

You were transfigured on the mount, O Christ our God, revealing your glory to your disciples, as much as they were able to bear. Let your everlasting light shine on us sinners, through the intercessions of the Birthgiver of God, O Giver of Light, glory to you!



Kontak (Tone 7)

You were transfigured on the mount, O Christ our God, revealing your glory to your disciples, as much as they were able to bear, so that when they saw you crucified, they would know it was voluntary, and would proclaim to all the world that you are the Radiance of the Father.

SPECIAL BOOK STUDY THIS WEEK

We will suspend our study this Wednesday of “The Heavenly Banquet” to a special session considering the Feast of the Transfiguration, contemplating the integration of the festal icon, festal hymns, and inner meaning of the Feast. The Paraclesis Service will precede the study at 6 pm (that evening only). All are invited and encouraged to attend, and be edified in the discussion of this profound and significant aspect of our Orthodox Faith.

PRAYER DURING THE FAST

To help us focus our time of preparation for the Feast of the Dormition, the Paraclesis Service will be held each weekday of this week. The Paraclesis is a service of supplication for help and healing, both spiritual and physical, and takes about an hour. Make time to be in the Lord’s house to pray together for the Lord’s great mercy, through the prayers of his All-pure Mother.

PARAKLESIS SERVICES DURING THE FAST

The Dormition Fast is our “summer Lent,” reflective of the Great Lent that precedes the celebration of our Lord’s death and resurrection. Likewise, we use this period of time to contemplate the falling asleep and translation into the heavens of our most Holy Lady, the Birthgiver of God. This is a more strict fast (like unto Lent), with only wine and oil allowed on the weekends, and fish allowed only for the day of the Transfiguration Feast.

As the Fast is not “just a diet” but a time for renewal of our spiritual focus, our church will offer the Service of Supplication (Paraclesis) to the Theotokos each weekday of this week.. This beautiful service (which lasts only about an hour) is an opportunity to offer our hearts in prayer for the health (soul and body) of our loved ones and ourselves. (Note that we will begin earlier on Wednesday evenings, 6 pm, because of the study class.)

SPECIAL FALL SEMINAR – MARK THE DATE!

Have you ever noted the term “classical education” and wondered just what that means? Our parish school, Hagia Sophia Classical Academy, will sponsor a very special guest speaker, Andrew Kern, on Friday, September 22, to address and inform this most important topic. Mr. Kern is the founder and president of the CiRCE Institute (circeinstitute.org) and a well-known and respected speaker nationwide on topics concerning Classical Christian education. Andrew will be conducting an in-house workshop for our Academy that Saturday, and has graciously agreed to have a lecture on Friday evening open to all. An engaging and inspiring speaker, Kern is a leader and pioneer in the field of

classical education. This talk will be well worth your time, even if you don’t have school-age children. Save the date, watch for more details to come soon, and plan to attend this lecture and be “educated” by a great educator!

ST. INNOCENT ORPHANAGE PANTRY PARTNERS

Please consider collecting and donating food items, toiletries, cleaning supplies, school supplies and other materials needed to support St. Innocent Orphanage. Starting Sunday, August 6th, and running through Sunday, September 3rd, a box will be placed in the church hall by the book corner. Working with other Orthodox parishes in the area, our goal is to donate at least 20 boxes of items, so we can take advantage of the nationwide free shipping offered through the program. See Neal Locasto for more information, or visit www.projectmexico.org/pantry-partners. At the website, you’ll find a complete list of summer needs to help you determine the items you can donate.

BOOKSTORE USED BOOK SALE

Bookstore manager Reader Brian Pletcher has suggested having a used book sale from the bookstore’s lending library and other donated used books, during the post-Dormition picnic on August 20. This is a great opportunity to purge your personal bookshelves of any titles you no longer wish to keep, and also will be a good chance to find and purchase titles you may be interested in at a cheap price. Anyone wishing to donate books to the sale is asked to bring them to the church by Saturday, August 19. Proceeds from the sale will go to support our parish Academy, Hagia Sophia.

UPCOMING TRAVEL FOR FR. DAVID

Fr. David has been asked to give the “clergy keynote” talk at this year’s Doxacon in Washington D. C. (www.doxacon.org if you are interested), and will be out of town from August 18-20. He asks for your prayers as he prepares. Then he and P’sa. Janene will be out of town over the Labor Day weekend, September 1-4. Fr. Silviu Bunta has graciously agreed to serve on those Sundays.

ON THE TRANSFIGURATION

Archpriest Andrew Phillips

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Today our Lord’s human nature was transfigured by the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father, Whose voice witnessed to the Son’s divine nature.

We are perhaps reminded of another Feast of the Church taken from the Holy Scriptures, where the divinity of Christ was also witnessed to by the Father and the Spirit proceeding from the Father - Theophany, the Baptism of Christ. Both these feasts have a great prominence in our Church, which has been lost outside Her, where people do not believe in the words of the Holy Scripture, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from God the Father alone.

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