

AUGUST 6, 2020  
THE HOLY TRANSFIGURATION  
OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST

"Verily I say unto you that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." (St. Mark 9:1; cf. St. Matthew 16:28)

What follows in the account of the synoptics (St. Mark 9:2-9; St. Matthew 17:1-9, St. Luke 9:27-30) shows us the Apostles, Peter, James and John becoming, in their lifetimes, witnesses of the Power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, eye witnesses of His Majesty (II Peter 1:16-18).

According to Patristic Testimony, what these three men witnessed was the Divinity, the splendor of the Divine Nature, of our Lord shining through the created nature which He had assumed at His incarnation. This event forms the foundation of the Orthodox understanding of Grace founded upon the real distinction between the unknowable and inaccessible essence of God, on one hand, and the knowable and communicable energies or activities of God on the other. And that since these communicable energies were expressions of the fullness of the infinite Divinity, to experience them was to experience the fullness of Divinity itself. Thus the light which the Apostles saw was the uncreated energies of God poured out upon them as a gift (grace), so that seeing and experiencing the Divinity of Christ, they could better understand the trials and triumphs of Jesus' human life which were already bearing down upon them.

It is, therefore, the Orthodox teaching that because Jesus showed Himself to His disciples not simply as the servant which He had become, but as God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, we celebrate this feast as manifestation of the Holy Trinity, and as manifesting to us that it is our vocation to experience this Divinity - to receive this vision - in so far as we can bear it.

God became as we are so that we may become as He is. St. Peter greets the Church: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our LORD, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: **whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (II Peter 1:2-4). We are called to this vision of divinity, and this participation in the Divine life because we are called to be really human instead of merely human; and to be really human is be a meeting point where the presence of God shines forth to a dark, broken and sinful world -- just as Jesus Christ was and is.

## GREAT VESPERS

### ***LORD I CALL: All stikhera of the Feast in tone 4:***

Before Your Crucifixion, O Lord,  
the mountain became as heaven,  
and like a tabernacle the cloud spread itself out,  
when You were transfigured, and the Father bore witness to You.  
Peter was present with James and John,  
since they were to be with You at the time of Your betrayal,  
that, having seen Your wondrous works,  
they might not be afraid of Your sufferings.//  
Grant us to venerate Your sufferings in peace, through Your mercy!

Before Your Crucifixion, O Lord,  
You took Your Disciples to a high mountain  
and were transfigured before them,  
illuminating them with bright rays of Your pow'r.  
From love of mankind and in Your sovereign might,  
it was Your desire to show them the splendor of Your Resurrection.  
In peace count us also worthy of this splendor, O God,//  
in Your mercy and Your love for mankind!

The mountain that once was veiled in gloom and smoke,  
is now holy and revered,  
since Your feet, O Lord, had stood upon it.  
For by Your dread Transfiguration,  
the mystery hidden before the ages  
has been made manifest in the last times to Peter, James, and John.  
Unable to endure the shining of Your face and the brilliance of Your garments,  
they fell to the ground upon their faces.  
Seized with wonder and amazement, they saw Moses and Elijah  
talking with You about the things that would befall You;  
and a voice came in testimony from the Father saying:  
“This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased; listen to Him!//  
It is He Who grants the world great mercy!”

When You were transfigured upon a high mountain, O Savior,  
having with You the chief Disciples,  
You shone forth in glorious majesty,  
proving that those who excel in the height of their virtues  
shall be made worthy of divine glory.  
Moses and Elijah, talking with Christ,  
showed that He is Lord of both the living and the dead,

the God Who spoke of old through the Law and the Prophets.  
The voice of the Father testified to Him from the cloud of light, saying:  
“Listen to Him, Who through the Cross has despoiled hell//  
and has given the dead eternal life!”

***GLORY...NOW AND EVER... Feast, tone 6:***

Prefiguring Your Resurrection, O Christ our God,  
You took with You in Your ascent of Mount Tabor  
Your three Disciples, Peter, James and John.  
When You were transfigured, O Savior,  
Mount Tabor was covered with light.  
Your Disciples, O Word, threw themselves down upon the ground,  
unable to gaze upon the form that none may see.  
The Angels ministered in fear and trembling;  
the heavens shook and the earth quaked, //  
as they beheld on earth the Lord of Glory.

**Old Testament Readings**

**1. THE READING FROM EXODUS**

The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction." Then Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. He said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them." When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from within the cloud. To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. **(EXODUS 24:12-18)**

**2. THE READING FROM EXODUS**

The lord spoke to Moses, as if one should speak to his friend; and he returned to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, departed not from the Tabernacle. And Moses said to the Lord, "Behold, Thou didst command me to lead forth this people, but Thou hast not showed me whom Thou wilt send with me; but Thou hast said to me, 'I know you above all, and you have found favor with me.' If, then, I have found grace in Thy sight, reveal Thyself to me, that I may see Thee clearly, that I may find grace in Thy sight, and that I may know that this great nation is Thy people." And *the Lord said to him*, "I Myself will go before you, and I will give you rest." And Moses said to Him, "If Thou Thyself dost not go with us, bring me not up from here. And how shall it be surely known that both I and Thy people have found grace with Thee, except Thou go with us? So both I and Thy people shall be glorified beyond all the nations, as many as are upon the earth." And the Lord said to Moses, "This word also, which you have spoken I will do; for you have found grace before Me, and I know you above all." And Moses said, "Show me Thy glory." And *the Lord said to Moses*, "I

will go before you with My glory, and I will call out My name, ‘the Lord’ before you; and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” And *again* He said, “You shall not be able to see My face, for man shall not see My face and live.” And *again* the Lord said, “Behold there is a place by Me; you shall stand upon the rock. And when My glory shall pass by, then I will put you in a cleft of the rock; and I will cover you with My hand, until I pass by. And I will take away My hand, and then you shall see My back; but My face shall not appear to you.” And having risen early in the morning, Moses went up Mount Sinai, as the Lord had told him. And the Lord descended in a cloud, and Moses stood there before Him and called out in the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before his face, and called out, “The Lord God, compassionate and merciful, longsuffering, greatly-merciful, and true.” And Moses, making haste, stooped down to the earth and worshipped the Lord. **(33:11-23; 34:4-6,8)**

### **3. THE READING FROM THE THIRD BOOK OF KINGS**

*In those days, Elijah went to Beer-sheba, in the land of Judah. And he left his servant there and went a days journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree. And he lay down and slept under the tree. And behold, someone touched him and said to him, “Arise, eat and drink.” And Elijah looked, and behold, at his head there was a cake of barley and a cruse of water. And he arose, and ate and drank, and lay down again and slept. And the angel of the Lord returned a second time, and touched him, and said to him, “Arise, eat and drink, for the journey will be too much for you.” And he arose, and ate and drank. And he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Mount Horeb. And he entered there into a cave, and lodged there. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and the Lord said to him, “You shall go forth and stand on the mountain before the Lord.” And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountain, and broke in pieces the rock before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire the voice of a gentle breeze, and the Lord was there. And it came to pass when Elijah heard it, he covered his face with his mantle and went out and stood before the cave. And the Lord said to him, “Go return on your way, and you shall come on the way of the wilderness of Damascus; and you shall anoint Eli’sha the son of Shaphat to be prophet in your place.”*

**(I Kings 19:3-9,11-13,15, 16)**

#### **LITYA: Feast, tone 2:**

In Your goodness You have sanctified the whole world with Your Light:  
You were transfigured on a high mountain,  
showing Your power to Your Disciples;  
for You redeem the world from transgression.//  
Therefore we cry out to You: “O Lord of compassion, save our souls!”

You were transfigured in glory on Mount Tabor, O Christ God,  
showing to Your Disciples the glory of Your Divinity.  
Enlighten us also with the light of Your knowledge

and guide us in the path of Your commandments,//  
for You alone are good and the Lover of mankind!

***Glory...Now & Ever...Amen, tone 5:***

Moses, who saw God,  
and Elijah who rode the fiery chariot across the heavens unconsumed,  
beheld You in the cloud at Your Transfiguration, O Christ.  
They testified that You are the Maker and fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.  
With them, O Master,  
count us also worthy of Your light,//  
that we may sing Your praises forever!

***APOSTIKHA: All stikhera of the Feast, tone 1:***

He Who of old spoke through symbols to Moses on Mount Sinai saying: "I am He Who is,"  
was transfigured today upon Mount Tabor before the Disciples.  
In His own person He showed them the nature of man  
arrayed in the original beauty of the Image.  
Calling Moses and Elijah to be witnesses of this surpassing grace,  
He made them partakers of the gladness,//  
foretelling His death on the Cross and His saving Resurrection.

*Verse: The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; the world and all that is in it, You have founded them!*

David, the ancestor of God,  
foresaw in the Spirit the sojourn with men of the only-begotten Son in the flesh,  
and from afar, called the creation together to rejoice with him,  
prophetically lifting up his voice to cry:  
"Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Your name!"  
For You went up to this mountain with Your Disciples and were transfigured, O Christ,  
making the image that had grown dark in Adam to shine once again like lightning,  
and transforming it into the glory and splendor of Your own Divinity.  
Therefore we cry aloud to You://  
"O Lord and Creator of all things, glory to You!"

*Verse: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Your name!*

When the chosen Apostles beheld upon the mountain of the Transfiguration  
the overwhelming flood of Your light,  
O Christ who hast no beginning,  
and Your unapproachable Divinity,  
they were caught up in a divine trance.  
The cloud of light shone around them on every side,  
and they heard the voice of the Father  
confirming the mystery of Your incarnation,

that even after taking flesh,  
You remain the only-begotten Son//  
and the Savior of the world!

**GLORY...NOW AND EVER... of the Feast, tone 6:**

Today on Mount Tabor, O Lord,  
You have shown the glory of Your divine form  
to Your chosen Disciples, Peter, James and John.  
For they looked upon Your garments that gleamed like the light  
and at Your face that shone more than the sun.  
Unable to endure the vision of Your brightness that none can bear,  
they fell to the earth, powerless to gaze at the sight,  
for they heard a voice that bore witness from above:  
“This is My beloved Son//  
Who has come into the world to save mankind!”

**DIVINE LITURGY**

**The First Antiphon**

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth! Sing of His name, give glory to His praise!  
(Ps.65/66:1)

*Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!*

The voice of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; Your lightning lighted up the world; the earth trembled and shook. (Ps.76/77:18) *(Refrain)*

Thou art clothed with honor and majesty, Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment.  
(Ps.103/104:2) *(Refrain)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. *(Refrain)*

**The Second Antiphon**

Mount Zion in the far north is the city of the great King. (Ps.47/48:2)

*Refrain: O Son of God, transfigured on the mountain, save us who sing to You:  
Alleluia!*

And He brought them to the mountain of His sanctuary, this mountain which His right hand had won. (Ps.77/78:54) *(Refrain)*

The Mount Zion which He loved, He built as His sanctuary with mighty strength.  
(Ps.77/78:68) *(Refrain)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*(“Only-begotten Son and immortal Word of God ... “)*

### **The Third Antiphon**

*Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.  
(Ps.124/125:1)*

#### **Tone 7      Troparion**

You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ God,  
revealing Your glory to Your Disciples as far as they could bear it.  
Let Your everlasting Light also shine upon us sinners,  
through the prayers of the Theotokos!//  
O Giver of Light, glory to You!

*As the mountains are round about it, so the Lord is round about His people, from this time and forevermore. (Ps.124/125:2)      Troparion of the Feast*

*O Lord, who shall sojourn in Your tabernacle? Who shall dwell on Your holy mountain?  
(Ps.14/15:1) Troparion of the Feast*

*Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord? And who shall stand in His holy place?  
(Ps.23/24:3) Troparion of the Feast*

#### **Entrance Verse**

*Send out Your light and Your truth; they have led me and brought me to Your holy mountain.  
(Ps.42/43:3)*

#### **TROPARION**

You were transfigured on the Mount, O Christ God,  
Revealing Your glory to Your disciples as far as they could bear it.  
Let Your everlasting light shine upon us sinners!  
Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Giver of Light, glory to You!

#### **KONTAKION: FEAST, Tone 7**

On the mountain You were transfigured, O Christ God,  
And Your disciples beheld Your glory as far as they could see it;  
So that when they would behold You crucified,  
They would understand that Your suffering was voluntary,  
And would proclaim to the world,  
That You are truly the Radiance of the Father!

**PROKEIMENON, tone 4:** O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all!

**Vs.** Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, Thou hast been greatly magnified!

**EPISTLE: (65) 2 Peter 1:10-19** Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in the dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

**Alleluia in the eighth tone:** The heavens are Thine; the earth also is Thine!  
**Vs.** Blessed are the people who know the festal shout!

**GOSPEL: (70) Matthew 17:1-9** At that time, Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and brought them up into a high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. While he yet spoke, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

**Hymn to the Theotokos:**

Magnify, o my soul,  
The Lord who was transfigured on Mount Tabor!  
Your birthgiving was incorruptible!  
God came from your body  
And appeared on earth in the flesh, dwelling among men.  
Therefore we magnify you, O Theotokos!

**Communion Hymn:** We shall walk, in the glory of your face! Alleluia...