

AUGUST 6, 2017

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

Mailing Address:

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**– Fr. Theodore Pantels,
Proistamenos (Pastor)
– Deacon Euthym Kontaxis,
M.D.**

Holy Communion Order

1. Please remain standing while following the directions of our ushers.
2. Ladies, kindly remove lipstick before receiving.
3. When receiving Holy Communion, make the Sign of the Cross, state your name (baptismal name), and naturally receive as if being fed.
4. Non-Orthodox Christians may not receive Holy Communion, but they may receive the Holy Bread at the end of the service.
5. All Orthodox Christians must be spiritually prepared to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Please see the priest if you have any questions.

WE HAVE SEEN THE TRUE LIGHT

The presence of the Apostles (Peter, John and James) at Mt. Tabor with Christ means that our own presence with Christ demands zeal on our part, as well. We are to have zeal to follow Christ through prayer, worship and the observance of His Commandments. In this way, we will be enlightened so that we can impart Christ's Light to others. The words of our Lord that there are people who "will see the Son of Man in His Kingdom" (St. Matthew 16: 26) come true in the fact that the Divine Liturgy is "The

Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

The Light of Christ at the time of His Transfiguration is the uncreated Light of the Divinity and it reveals His two natures—fully human and fully Divine. In this, it is possible also for people to share in Christ's Divine Light. This is shown, for example, in the face of Moses, when his face shined as he descended from Mt. Sinai with the tablets of the

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WHAT THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST MEANS FOR US

"St. John of Damascus makes a remarkable observation. The word "God" in the Scriptures refers not to the divine nature of substance, for that is unknowable. "God" refers rather to the divine energies – the power and grace of God that we can perceive in this world. The Greek word for "God" is "Theos" (The Greek word, "Thea" is the root word of "theater," which is a "display for us to see." [Note by Fr. Ted]). The word "Theos" comes from a verb meaning "run", "see", or "burn." These are energy words, so to speak, not essence words.

In John 10:34, Jesus quoting Psalm 81:6, repeats the passage, "You are gods." The fact that He was speaking to a group of hypocritical religious leaders who were accusing Him of blasphemy makes the meaning doubly clear: Jesus is not using "god" to refer to divine nature. We are gods in that we bear His image, not His nature.

[The word "Deification" means that] we are to become more like God through His grace or divine energies. In creation, humans were made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26) according to human nature. In other words, humanity by nature is an icon or image of the deity: The divine image is in all of humanity. Through sin, however, this image and likeness of God was marred, and we fell."

– Taken from: Orthodox Study Bible, pg. 1692



Η παρουσία των Αποστόλων με τον Χριστόν στο Θαβωρινόν ορος σημαίνει ότι η πνευματική μας παρουσία κοντά στον Χριστόν εξαρτάται από το ζήλον μας να ακολουθήσουμε τον Χριστόν διαμέσων της προσευχής, λατρείας και τηρήσεως των εντολών Του. Κατά αυτόν τον τρόπον, θα φωτισθούμε ώστε να μεταδώσουμε το Φως Χριστού σε άλλους. Ο λόγος του Κυρίου ότι είναι άνθρωποι οι οποίοι <ειδῶσι τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐν τῇ Βασιλείᾳ Του> (Ματθ. 16:26) πραγματοποιείται κατά την τελετήν της Θ.Λειτουργίας, ἀφού ἡ Λειτουργία εἶναι <ἡ Βασιλεία τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ, τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος.>

Το Φως Χριστού κατά την Μεταμόρφωση Του εἶναι τὸ ἀκτιστό Φως τῆς Θεότητος καὶ ἀποκαλύπτονται οἱ δύο φύσεις τοῦ Κυρίου—την ἀνθρωπινὴν καὶ τὴν Θεϊαν. Ἀλλὰ εἶναι δυνατόν στον ἄνθρωπον νὰ συμμετέχει στο Φως Χριστού. Αὐτὸ δείχεται, π.χ., ἀπὸ τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ Μωυσεως ὅταν τὸ πρόσωπο τοῦ ἐλάμψε καθὼς ἐκατεβήκε ἀπὸ τὸ ὄρος Σινὰ μετὰ τὰς πινάκας τοῦ Νόμου. Ἴσως, ὁ προορισμὸς μας εἶναι νὰ συμμετέχουμε στὴν δόξαν τοῦ Θεοῦ. Με ἀλλὰ λόγια, ὁ Θεὸς ἐπλάσσει τὸν ἄνθρωπον κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα καὶ τὴν ὁμοίωσιν Του καὶ, συνεπῶς, ὁ σκοπὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἶναι πάντοτε νὰ ἀντανάκλα τὸ Φῶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ στις καθημερινὰς ὑποθέσεις του. Ὡς παραδειγμὰ ἔχουμε τὰς εἰκόνας τῶν ἁγίων στις ὁποῖες φαίνεται τὸ φῶς—το ὁποῖο <εἰκονογραφεῖται> γύρω ἀπὸ τὰ πρόσωπα τῶν. Ἐπίσης, ἔχουμε τὴν ἐμπειρίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ Φωτός ὅταν μεταλαμβάνουμε τὰ Ἀχραντὰ Μυστήρια, καὶ, συνεπῶς, ἀκούμεν τὸν ὕμνον, <Εἶδομεν τὸ Φῶς τὸ Ἀληθινόν>. +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

Law (*Exodus 34: 29-35*). Indeed, the destiny of every human being is to participate in the glory of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That is why we invoke the Name of the Trinity when one is baptized. Said another way, God created us in His Image and Likeness and, as a result, our purpose in life is to always reflect this Divine energy of Christ's Light in everything we do.

That our destiny is to participate in the Light of Christ is emphasized in the icons of our Saints, with the drawing of the halo around the face of each individual Saint depicted. Also, we are to have the *experience* of the Divine Light every time we partake of Holy Communion. This is declared through the hymn that follows Holy Communion: *Idhomen to Fos to Alithinon...* ("We have seen the true Light; we have received the Heavenly Spirit; we have found the true Faith, worshiping the indivisible Trinity, for the Trinity has saved us.").

The somewhat casual notion that has become the norm among Christians regarding Holy Communion amounts to a heresy, stated in the usual terms, "We take Communion." Holy Communion is a Sacrament in which we *partake*. We *partake* in Christ's Life—His salvation—by *becoming* the "light of the world" as people bearing His Divine Light to the world. In the hymn that follows Holy Communion, "We have seen the Light...", it is not simply that we "have seen;" the "seeing" is the *experience of God*. Allowing us to partake in God's energies is itself an act of Diving Love, making us co-workers with God.

Holy Communion imparts to us the Divine energy of Christ's love. Christ-like love is a "*transfiguring power*." Christ's love gives us the power to be vigilant in discerning evil from good and the power to avoid sin. Our free will is in play at all times. By making the choice to pray and worship our Lord, we are given the gift of God's Wisdom, which energizes us to recognize deceptions and fight against temptations. It is the enlightenment that allows us to place our faith in Christ our God— to zealously "climb mountains" to be with Him. By "climbing mountains" I mean working hard to turn from putting ourselves first to putting God first, making us vessels of God's Love.

Thus, the Transfiguration of Christ is the Divine message saying that Christ is True God, Whose Will is to make the light within us to glow. As to "Why?", Fr. Stanley Harakas writes, "*Christ's saving work restores the 'likeness' of God to all human beings, giving to all the potential of the new life reaching toward 'theosis' (i.e., sanctification)...[our] whole ethical endeavor consists of our 'internalization of Christ through the Sacramental Life and His Commandments.'* (*Toward Transfigured Life*, pg. 236). +FR. THEODORE

PRAY FOR THE SICK: George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Argyroula Krespis (Nick Krespis' mother), Constantine Papapetru, Erika Aguilar, Mary Mitsias, Nula Papapetru, Tom Evans, Jim Alex, Jean Chronis-Kuhn, (*Many faithful on our Prayer List face chronic or serious illness*).

HYMNS FOR THIS SUNDAY'S CELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY:

ANTIPHON I: *"Tes presvies tis Theotokou..." (By the prayers of the Theotokos...)*

Verse 1—Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in His holy mountain.

Refrain: *"Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soson imas."*

Verse 2—He who prepares mountains in His strength, who is girded with power.

Refrain: *"By the prayers of the Theotokos, Savior, save us."*

Verse 3— You clothe Yourself with thanksgiving and majesty. You cover Yourself with light as with a garment.

Refrain: *"Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soson imas."*

Verse 4 - The mountains shall greatly rejoice at the presence of the Lord.

Chanter(s): *Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.*

Refrain: *"By the prayers of the Theotokos, Savior, save us."*

ANTIPHON II: *"Soson imas Ie Theou..." (Save us, O Son of God...)*

Verse 1—His foundations are in the holy mountains.

Refrain: *"Soson imas Ie Theou, O en to orhee to Thavor metamorfotheis, psallontas si alleluia."*

Verse 2 -The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

Refrain: *"Save us, O Son of God, Who was Transfigured in glory on Mt. Tabor, we sing to You, Alleluia."*

Verse 3 -Glorious things were said concerning you, O city of God.

Refrain: *"Soson imas Ie Theou, O en to orhee to Thavor metamorfotheis, psallontas si alleluia."*

Verse 4—: A man will say, "Mother Zion," and a man was born in her; for the Most High Himself founded it.

Refrain: *"Save us, O Son of God, Who was Transfigured in glory on Mt. Tabor, we sing to You. Alleluia."*

Doxa Patri ke Io ke Aghio Pnevmati ke nin ke aei ke eis tous eonas ton eonon. Amin

People: *"O Monogenis Ios ke Logos tou Theou..." (O Only-Begotten Son and Word of God...)*

ANTIPHON III—Instead of *"Defte Proskinisomen..." (We bow down...):* For with You is the fountain of life; O Lord, in Your light we shall see light. Save us, O Son of God, who was transfigured in glory on Mt. Tabor.

Hymn for this Sunday: *Metemorfotheis en to orhee... (You were transfigured upon the mountain, O Christ our God, showing to Your disciples Your glory as much as they could bear. Do also in us, sinners though we may be, shine Your everlasting light, by the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Giver of light. Glory to You.)*

Kontakion Hymn: *Metemorfotheis en to orhee... (On the mountain You were transfigured, O Christ our God, and Your disciples saw as much of Your glory as they could behold, that when they should see You crucified, they would know that You suffered by Your own will and would proclaim to all the world that You truly are the splendor of the Father.)*

READINGS: Epistle-2 Peter 1:10-19/ Gospel— St. Matthew 17:1-9

Instead of "Axion Estin": *Nin ta anikousta ikousthi ... (Now has been heard what was unheard of: for the Son born of a Virgin, having no father, by the voice of the Father in glory has been witnessed that He Himself is fully both God and Man throughout all ages.)*

Communion Hymn— We shall walk in the light of the glory of Your face, O Lord, forever. Alleluia.

After Holy Communion—*Metemorfotheis en to orhee... (You were transfigured upon the mountain, O Christ our God, showing to Your disciples Your glory as much as they could bear. Do also in us, sinners though we may be, shine Your everlasting light, by the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Giver of light. Glory to You.)*



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coffee Hour: Tasia and J.J. Richards

PHILOPTOCHOS – Thank you to our parishioners who have donated to our Bottled Water Project. Don't forget to give us any changes to you phone, address and email for our new Directory. We need the changes by Sunday, August 6. See **Linda Kallis**. We need volunteers for sponsors and hostesses for Sunday Coffee Hours in September. See Athena Snarskis.

PLANNING AHEAD – Looking ahead to next month, there are a few dates that are noteworthy:

Monday, September 11th – Festival Meeting – planning for the 2018 Greek Festival

Friday, September 15th – “Back After Summer Break” Coloring Session & Luncheon (See enclosed flier)

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday, August 7th.....Paraklisis – 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 8th.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, August 9th.....Paraklisis – 6:30 p.m.

Friday, August 11th.....Men’s Bible Study – 11:30 a.m. (St. Matthew 17: 1-9)
Paraklisis – 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, August 12th.....Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

“We did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made know 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.” -2 Peter 1: 16-18

NOTE: In his Second Epistle St. Peter tells us in no uncertain terms that he was an eyewitness to the event on Mt. Tabor when our Lord and Savior was Transfigured, revealing His divine nature as True God. On this basis, the Church proclaims that Christ is fully God and fully Man. This experience of St. Peter translates into a prophetic message: *“The Transfiguration is a proof and foretaste of the coming of Christ in glory...The testimony of the Apostles both confirms the prophetic word concerning the Second Coming and shows how to interpret prophecy. Just as Scripture was not written by the mere volition of men, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so Scripture is to be interpreted by the holy people of God guided by the Holy Spirit.”* (Orthodox Study Bible, pg. 1693).

We encourage all of our parents to sit in the church with their entire family as they participate in the beauty and mysteries of the Divine Liturgy. For those with young children, feel free to sit near an aisle so that you may easily take your children for a break, as needed. If necessary, we have a “crying room” in the narthex for your use. God Bless.



Adult Coloring

**Back after summer
break! Coloring
Session & Luncheon**

September 15, 2017
12-2 pm

St. George Church hall

RSVP by 9/9/17

Please join us for our next adult coloring session on Friday, Sept. 15th at noon in our church hall.

Lunch begins at noon with coloring to follow.

\$5.00 minimum donation requested for lunch. Proceeds will be donated to the church.

Coloring pencils and coloring book sheets will be provided.

RAFFLE PRIZES!

RSVP to Rhonda Latkovic by 9/9/17