

The Gospel's Voice



Orthodox Parish of the Holy Transfiguration

Number 21, August 2017

The Transfiguration

The Transfiguration is celebrated on August 6th to commemorate the dedication of the first church built on Mount Thabor in the 5th century.

The feast of the Transfiguration, highly venerated by the Orthodox Church, can serve as a key to understanding the humanity of Christ in the Eastern tradition. Indeed, if we worship and venerate kenosis, the divine abasement, the Church constantly reminds us that Christ is fully God, even when he divests himself of his glory, for in him bodily dwelleth all the fullness of the Divinity ... (Colossians 2: 9). The authors of the Byzantine hymns always have these two poles in mind, even to evoke the cross and the tomb: Christ voluntarily obliterates himself, accepts forfeiture and abandonment, and in his very poverty the majesty and Triumph of the King of glory.

During the earthly life of Christ, the Transfiguration lies between Baptism and the Passion. After manifesting himself to John the Baptist, Jesus now reveals to the apostles the mystery of his Person: the second Person of the Trinity. It is by the apostles, ocular witnesses of His majesty (2 Peter 1:16), that we have inherited the revelation of Christ, God and man at the same time.

From the Transfiguration to the Cross

Jesus unites Peter, James and John to contemplate his glory on Tabor, even in this lifetime. The same apostles will be chosen later to assist their Master in the agony of the Garden of Gethsemane. The apostles will then see Jesus crucified, tortured, without beauty, without glory ... the object of contempt and the rebuff of humanity. They will be terrified at the sight of the suffering Servant (Isaiah 53) and scandalized by the apparent degradation of their Master. That is why Jesus grants them an instant to see his glory, so that they may understand that the Passion of the Lord is voluntary.

From the Transfiguration to the Resurrection

The transfigured Christ announces the risen Christ, the conqueror of death; Christ appears to his disciples with a glorious body. As it came out of the sealed grave, so it appears in the midst of the apostles, all doors being locked. His body no longer obeys the laws of nature, to which he voluntarily submitted during his earthly life.

When the risen Christ appears, the disciples believe they see a spirit. But Jesus rejects this doubt: "Touch me," he said. They then realize that his body is real, living, made of flesh and blood. Jesus is ready to take food, to share the meal with them, proof that it is not a ghost, but a glorious, transfigured body.



The resurrected Christ blows on his apostles, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit ..." (John 20: 19-22). From his body, from his breath comes the gift of the Spirit. Let us now look at the icon of the Transfiguration: on the Tabor, the rays of light emanating from the body of Christ reach the apostles, the rocks, the trees, fill the heavenly vault. The Light, brighter than the sun, floods the whole earth. Light is the Father, Light is the Word, Light is the Holy Spirit. The Father sends his Son into the world, the Son reveals the splendor of the Father and gives the gift of the Holy Spirit to men.

The Divine Light, the uncreated Light, the inexhaustible Light, is the Grace God three times transmits to men to transfigure the earth.

When God acts in the world, it is always an act of the Trinity, the three divine Persons in one accord.

Moses and Elias on the Thabor

Moses and Elias, gathered around Christ on Mount Tabor, came to testify. Both have had the vision of God on the mountain, they now come to testify that Christ is in truth God incarnate, the one announced by the Law and the Prophets. Moses represents the law of the Old Testament, while in Elijah is manifested the gift of prophecy.

The Holy Spirit spoke by the prophets, dictated the Law, now he bears witness to the incarnate Word. The Law and the prophets find their fulfillment, their crowning in the Person of Christ. This is not in contradiction with Scripture, but its outcome:

"DO NOT BELIEVE THAT I DID ABOLISHED THE LAW OR THE PROPHETS:

I DID NOT ABOLISHED, BUT COMPLETE. "

(According to the Orthodox catechesis: the Feasts and the Life of Jesus Christ, II, The Resurrection, pp. 29-46, in French)



During a visit to Greece, Patriarch Kirill said: *(I quote from memory)*

"The Soviet empire fell in one day, and it was on the day of the feast of the Transfiguration. The hope of Christians is what is realized! "

The Transfiguration of men and of the world is our hope!

Let us continue to hope in a better world until Christ transfigures it.

Divine Liturgy

Every Sunday at 9.30 a.m.

Tuesday the 1st of August: *beginning of the fast of the
Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God.*

Sunday August the 6th: **Feast of the Holy Transfiguration**

The 13th: End of the Feast of the Transfiguration

Tuesday the 15th at 9.30 a.m.: **Dormition of the Most Holy
Mother of God. Divine Liturgy.**

The 20th:

The 27th:

Tuesday the 29th: Head off of the Holy Precursor and Prophet
John the Baptist.

Matins at 9.30 a.m. every week day.

The Orthodox Church of the Holy Transfiguration

Grande-Rivière N-O

Mauritius

(behind Garage BALA)

**Divine Liturgy every
Sunday**

at 9.30 a.m.

*Matins at 9.30 a.m. every
week day.*



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