

# **SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH**

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## **BULLETIN OF AUGUST 2, 2009**

### **SUNDAY/AUGUST 2**

**8th Sunday After Pentecost**

**(Tone 7)**

9:10 Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Coffee Hour

### **TUESDAY/AUGUST 4**

7:00p.m. Compline & Confession

### **WEDNESDAY/AUGUST 5**

3:00p.m. Confession

7:00p.m. Vigil and blessing of fruits

### **THURSDAY/AUGUST 6**

**TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD**

**(One of "the 12 Great Feasts")**

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy and  
blessing of fruits

### **SATURDAY/AUGUST 8**

9:30a.m. Akathist & Confession

5:30p.m. Vigil & Confession

### **SUNDAY/AUGUST 9**

**9th Sunday After Pentecost**

**(Tone 8)**

**St. Herman of Alaska**

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Coffee Hour

12:00p.m. Film Presentation: "Ostrog"  
In the Conference Room

### **Dormition Lent – Aug. 1st thru 14th**

This two week Lent is held to honor the repose, burial, resurrection and ascension into heaven of the Holy Virgin Mary. The Lent ends on the feast of the Falling-Asleep (Dormition) of the Theotokos on Aug. 15th. A fast is observed from meat, dairy, fish, wine and oil. Your parish wall calendar indicates days permitting modifications to the fasting rules. We should all strive to keep this Lent as best we can.

### **THE TRANSFIGURATION**



### **WHY TRANSFIGURATION IS CELEBRATED ON AUGUST 6<sup>TH</sup>**

The Lord's Transfiguration took place in February, not in August when our Orthodox Church observes it. Christ's Church centuries ago transferred this Feast from February to August in order to keep it from falling during the days of the Great Fast (which would not be appropriate to the services of that period, a time of repentance and fasting, corresponding to and appropriate to our current multi-calamitous life, while the Lord's Transfiguration gives a foretaste of the age to come). August 6<sup>th</sup> was selected rather than any other date because the Elevation of the Lord's Cross is observed on September 14<sup>th</sup> at which also the Lord's Passion is observed, and, since the Transfiguration happened 40 days before the Savior's crucifixion, the Church Fathers counted 40 days before the Feast of the Elevation of the Lord's Cross and decided to celebrate the Lord's Transfiguration on that day, August 6<sup>th</sup>.



### **Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!**

Aug. 03, 1995	Helen Hnatuk
Aug. 04, 1970	Archpriest Peter Karel
Aug. 05, 1966	Jacob Hosko
Aug. 05, 1977	Joseph Pituch
Aug. 05, 1988	Lepasava Ratzkovich
Aug. 06, 1943	Sarafina Spak
Aug. 06, 1946	Jacob Russaway
Aug. 06, 1974	Artem Kuchner
Aug. 06, 1989	Andrew Gavlick
Aug. 07, 1916	Anna Wislosky
Aug. 07, 1931	Michael Gargol
Aug. 07, 1932	Maria Vozny
Aug. 07, 1941	Helen Martchisin
Aug. 08, 1945	Mary Lebedz
Aug. 08, 1949	Shelia Mc Closkey
Aug. 09, 1916	George Siplak
Aug. 09, 1939	Michel Sapochuk
Aug. 09, 1979	Parasceva Kulwinsky

### **Remember in Prayer**

Mary Holovach (Home)); Theodora Combs (Medical Treatment in California).

### **Special Diocesan Assembly – Mon. Aug 31st in Clifton, NJ**

The purpose of this Assembly is to nominate a candidate for bishop of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey. A Lay Delegate is sought from our parish to attend. Speak with Fr. James.

### **Incense Fragrance Used**

Sunday, Aug. 2nd - Imperial Rose  
Sunday, Aug. 9th - Patmos

### **The Parish Is Seeking Church School Teachers**

The Christian Education of our parish children is of great importance. Presently, we are seeking teachers for classes. It would be good to have at least 3 teachers with other parents acting as aides. You will be trained and guided in this ministry. Please speak with Fr. James or Stacey Kita as soon as possible for more information or to make a commitment.

### **Summer Film Festival – Sun. Aug. 9th (12:00noon) & Tues. Aug. 11th (7:30p.m.)**

**"Ostrog" or "The Island"** This Russian produced film closed the 2006 Venice Film Festival and received the Golden Eagle Award. Structured like a parable, "Ostrov" tells the tale of Father Anatoly, a fictional monk who for decades seeks God's forgiveness for shooting a fellow soldier at the Nazi's behest during the Second World War. To save his own life. The film is set in the 1970's in a remote Orthodox Monastery. In the film, we enter into the heart of a man seeing the consequences of sin and God's forgiveness.

The two presentations begin sharply at 12:00p.m. and 7:30p.m. in the Conference Room. Come! Bring someone with you!

### **Dormition Lent & The Discipline of Confession and Holy Communion**

In the time of Dormition Lent (Aug. 1st thru 14th), - and be extension for the month of August - the Mysteries of Confession and Holy Communion ought to be received by all the faithful.

Those who regularly receive Holy Communion every Sunday must go to Confession in the month of August if they have not been to Confession any time after Pascha (April 19th). This includes children as well.

Those who are home bond are asked to make arrangements for Fr. James to bring the Sacraments to their homes in the month of August.

### **Offerings for the week of Aug. 2**

**Olive Oil** - In memory of Michael and Justina; in memory of Joan; in memory of Elena; for the health of Mary (birthday); in memory of John & Sarafina; in memory of Vaschen and Emilia.

**Wine** - for a safe trip.

### **Parish Library**

Please check out a book or video. Be mindful that they should be returned in one month, or at least renewed.



## THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

*From the Prologue of St. Nikolai Velimirovich*

In the third year of His preaching, the Lord Jesus often spoke to His disciples of His approaching passion but at the same time of His glory following His suffering on the Cross. So that His impending passion would not totally weaken His disciples and that no one would fall away from Him, He, the All-wise, wanted to partially show them His divine glory before His passion. For that



reason, He took Peter, James and John with Him and, with them, went out at night to Mt. Tabor and there was transfigured before them: "And His face shone as the sun and His garments became white as snow" (St. Matthew 17:2). There appeared along side Him, Moses and Elijah, the great Old Testament prophets. And, seeing this, His disciples were amazed. Peter said: "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if You will, let us make here three tabernacles; one for You, one for Moses and one for Elijah" (St. Matthew 17:4). While Peter still spoke, Moses and Elijah departed and a bright cloud overshadowed the Lord and His disciples and there came a voice from the cloud saying: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear Him" (St. Matthew 17:5). Hearing the voice, the disciples fell to the ground on their faces as though dead and remained that way, lying in fear, until the Lord came near to them and said: "Arise and be not afraid" (St. Matthew 17:7). Why did the Lord take only three disciples on Tabor and not all? Because Judas was not worthy to behold the divine glory of the Teacher, Whom he will betray and the Lord did not want to leave him [Judas] alone at the foot of the mountain so that the betrayer would not, by that, justify his betrayal. Why was our Lord transfigured on a mountain and not in a valley? So as to teach us two virtues: love of labor and godly-thoughts. For, climbing to the heights required labor and height represents the heights of our thoughts, i.e., godly-thoughts. Why was our Lord

### **Troparion (Tone 7)**

Thou wast transfigured on the Mount, O Christ God, revealing Thy glory to Thy disciples as far as they could bear it. Let Thine everlasting light shine upon us sinners! Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Giver of Light, glory to Thee!

### **Kontakion (Tone 7)**

On the mountain wast Thou transfigured, O Christ God, and Thy disciples beheld Thy glory as far as they could see it; so that when they would behold Thee crucified, they would understand that Thy suffering was voluntary, and would proclaim to the world that Thou art truly the Radiance of the Father!



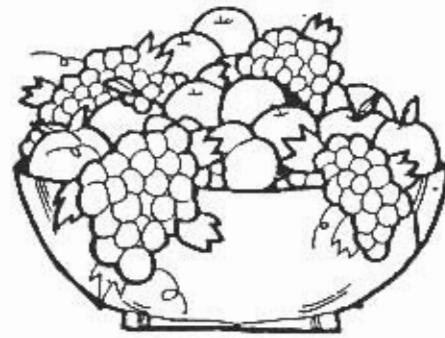
Many hundreds of years ago a very holy old man lived in a desert. One day people came to him and said, "Father, teach us, how can we come closer to God while we live in the world?" The old man drew a circle in the sand at his feet. "This circle is the world," he said "and here in the center of it is God. Each one of us lives in the world," and he made dots around the edge of the circle. "As we try to come closer to God, we draw closer to each other and this is the only way in which we can come closer to God. Remember it."

transfigured at night? Because, the night rather than the day is more suitable for prayer and godly-thoughts and because the night, by its darkness, conceals all the beauty of the earth and reveals the beauty of the starry heavens. Why did Moses and Elijah appear? In order to destroy the error of the Jews, as though Christ is one of the prophets; Elijah or Jeremiah or some other that is why He appears as a King above the prophets and that is why Moses and Elijah appear as His servants. Until then, our Lord manifested His divine power many times to the disciples but, on Mt. Tabor, He manifested His divine nature. This vision of His Divinity and the hearing of the heavenly witness about Him as the Son of God, should serve the disciples in the days of the Lord's passion, in strengthening of an unwavering faith in Him and His final victory.

# The Blessing of Fruit

by

ALEXANDER SCHMEMANN



It is an ancient custom in Orthodox churches to bless fruits and vegetables on the feast of Transfiguration. This prompts us to ask ourselves: what is the meaning of this ancient rite, and of blessing, sanctification in general, since the blessing of fruit on Transfiguration is only one of many such rites? If we open the liturgical service book where all these rites are collected, the so-called "Book of Needs," we find special services such as blessings for a new home, a field, a garden, a well. It is as if the Church addresses itself to the entire world, as if God's right hand of blessing were being extended over all through these rites of blessing and sanctification. Why have people from time immemorial felt the need for blessings?

We must say immediately that proponents of anti-religious propaganda unquestioningly regard all these rites as superstition which, in their view, is the whole content of religion. They argue that superstition is a product of fear: a person is afraid of being poisoned, afraid of a bad harvest, afraid that his house will burn down, afraid of other people. Religion purveys deliverance from fear: sprinkle the fruit or the garden or the home with holy water and God will protect both them and you. "So you see, it's all crude ignorance, superstition and...deception." However, in presenting the issue this way, atheist propaganda does not mention any of the prayers or rites involved with these supposed superstitions. They make it sound as if priests, the clergy, are a cadre of swindlers who exploit fear and ignorance by using incomprehensible magical incantations. But if one actually listens to these prayers and looks closely at these rites, if only once in a lifetime one experiences the joy of that radiant and sunlit Transfiguration noonday blessing, then it becomes clear that the deception is not coming from the Church, but from ill-willed atheist propaganda. It is precisely this propaganda, and not the Church's prayer, which is permeated with fear, mistrust, and a need to denounce anything more elevated, more pure, more profound than its own simplistic, mundane, and materialistic approach to the world and to life. For what we see and hear and experience above all in these rites and prayers is joy and thanksgiving. But if fear were present, there could be no joy and no thanksgiving; and conversely, if joy is present, there can be no fear. Fear produces misery and mistrust, but there is none of this in transfiguration's light. But what is the source of this joy and thanksgiving?

One of Osip Mandelstam's poems, devoted to the eucharistic liturgy, the main service of Christian worship, includes this wonderful verse: "Take into your hands the whole world, as if it were a simple apple..." Perhaps here, because it is so simple and childlike, we see better than anywhere else the source of joy and thanksgiving that permeate Christian faith. In an apple, and in everything within the world, faith sees, recognizes, and accepts God's gift, filled with love, beauty and wisdom. Faith hears the apple and the world speaking of that boundless love that created the world and life and gave them to us

as our life. The world itself is the fruit of God's love for humanity, and only through the world can human beings recognize God and love him in return... And only in truly loving his own life, can a person thereby accept the life of the world as God's gift. Our fall, our sin, is that we take everything for granted—and therefore everything, including ourselves, becomes routine, depressing, empty. The apple becomes just an apple. Bread is just bread. A human being is just a human being. We know their weight, their appearance, their activities, we know everything about them, but we no longer know them, because we do not see the light that shines through them. The eternal task of faith and of the Church is to overcome this sinful, monotonous habituation; to enable us to see once again what we have forgotten how to see; to feel what we no longer feel; to experience what we are no longer capable of experiencing. Thus, the priest blesses bread and wine, lifting them up to heaven, but faith sees the bread of life, it sees sacrifice and gift, it sees communion with life eternal.

So, on Transfiguration we bring to church apples, pears, grapes, vegetables, and suddenly the church itself is transformed anew into that mystical garden, into that blessed paradise where man's life and his encounter with God began. And just as that first man rejoiced and gave thanks to God as he opened his eyes for the first time and saw this world where everything, by God's own word, was "very good," so in this rite of blessing we see the world as if for the first time, as the reflection of God's wisdom and love, and we rejoice and give thanks. And through this joy and thanksgiving our life is purified, renewed and reborn. No, we do not negate the material world, as atheist propaganda falsely claims, nor do we repudiate it; on the contrary, we sanctify and bless it, for in it we joyfully and with thanksgiving see and feel the gift of God. "Heaven and earth are full of your glory," we sing in church. The significance of blessing is that through it, this glory breaks into our drowsy consciousness, opens our ears, opens our eyes, and life itself becomes praise, joy and thanksgiving.

But what about evil, people ask me. What about suffering, what about death? To this we answer: if we are filled to the brim with this light, if we genuinely accept this blessing and sanctification and bring them within, then we ourselves become the place where the victory over evil begins. And death will be swallowed up in victory, for we live in a world where Christ lived and continues forever to be present. And if in everything and everyone in the world we see him, love him, give ourselves to him; if in all, we see the light of his presence, his love, and his victory—then nothing can separate us from him.