

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

Wednesday: Lay Vespers 6:30 PM

Saturday: Vespers 5 PM

Sunday: Matins 8:45 AM

Sunday School 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 10 AM



August 13, 2023 – 10th Sunday After Pentecost | Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk | Leavetaking of the Feast of the Holy Transfiguration of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ

By His Eminence Metropolitan Jeremiah of Gortynos and Megalopolis

A few days ago, my Christian brethren, we celebrated the great Despotie Feast of the Transfiguration of our Savior Jesus Christ. This feast, great as it is, does not end on the same day it is celebrated, but it has a forefeast and an afterfeast. Now we are in its afterfeast.

We welcome every Despotie feast with fasting. And the fast of the first five days of August, as Balsamon says, is in expectation of the coming feast of the Transfiguration. Then, a day after the feast, begins the fast of the Mother of God for the feast on August 15th, although these two fasts have become consolidated and are regarded as one for the feast of our Panagia.

On the feast of the Transfiguration, my beloved, Jesus Christ made it known that He is God. This is what we believe about Christ. We believe that the Son of God became incarnate in the sanctified womb of our Panagia and truly took on a human nature. He is God and man, or in one word we can call Him the "God-man". In His one Person, or as we say in His one Hypostasis, the two natures, the divine and the human, became united. But the people didn't understand that Jesus Christ was God,

not even His disciples, because His divine nature was covered by His human nature. On Mount Tabor, however, where the Transfiguration took place, He revealed His divinity, His divine glory. The Transfiguration of Christ proclaimed that He was truly God. This is why this feast is so great.

The Transfiguration of Christ, Christian brethren, took place before His crucifixion on the Cross. This shows us the purpose as to why Christ was transfigured. He was transfigured, that is He revealed His divinity, in order for His disciples, when they saw Him suffering on the Cross, to understand that He did so willingly and for our salvation. I repeat, the Transfiguration of Christ took place before His Passion, therefore, in order to reveal that He was God, and that He was suffering not out of weakness, but He did so willingly for our salvation. This is what we chant in the Kontakion for the feast:

You were transfigured upon the mount, O Christ our God, and Your disciples, in so far as they could bear, beheld Your glory. Thus, when they see You crucified, they may understand Your voluntary passion, and proclaim to the world that You are truly the effulgence of the Father.

But if the Transfiguration of Christ took place before His Passion, why do we celebrate it now in August and not in the Spring prior to the Passion of Christ? My Christians, even now in August we are celebrating the Transfiguration of Christ truly before His Passion. From the Transfiguration of Christ on August 6th, we begin a Forty Day preparation for the great feast of the Cross on September 14th. This is why during Matins on the feast of the Transfiguration we begin the chant the Katavasies in honor of the Cross that begin:

Inscribing the invincible weapon of the Cross upon the waters, Moses marked a straight line before him with his staff and divided the Red Sea, opening a path for Israel who went over dry land. Then he marked a second line across the waters and united them in one, overwhelming the chariots of Pharaoh. Therefore let us sing to Christ our God, for He has been glorified.

If you calculate from August 6th to September 14th, you will find that it comes to forty days. We have thus entered the Forty Day preparation period that will end on September 14th, when we will honor and celebrate the crucifixion of our Christ. For this feast of the Cross on September 14th is considered equal to Great and Holy Friday, and we fast strictly on this day, not even consuming oil. Thus our Church celebrates the Transfiguration before the Passion of Christ, as it really happened.

But let us go to Tabor, the mountain on which Christ was transfigured. When we say, my Christians, that Christ was transfigured, do not understand it to mean that He changed, that He became something else. No! Rather, He revealed who He

truly is! He revealed His divinity, because He is truly God. The glory of His divinity shined.

My brethren, it is for this divine glory that we were created. God created humanity out of love, making us "in His image" and "according to His likeness", that we may share in His divine glory. Yes! We were not made to simply live a biological life - to get married, to bear offspring and then to die. Rather, along with this, and above all this, there is a deeper purpose to our lives, which is to discover God and be united with Him. "Theosis" is what we call this union with our God. We were born in order to enter into this Taboric Light. The saints, whose icons are before us, achieved this, which is why their heads are crowned with halos. The depiction of halos in icons is the depiction of this Taboric Light. It is the glory of the Transfigured Christ. Our saints are said to be "glorified". This is why the priest says "Our Holy Glorious Father..." when he commemorates a certain saint. And our saints are called "glorified" because they have partaken in the glory of God. This glory of God is called the "memory" of God. When we chant at a memorial or funeral "Eternal Memory", we are praying for the reposed, and not simply hoping that they will be remembered for eternity by those on earth who loved them, for we also who love them will also die. Rather, when we say "Eternal Memory" for the dead, it is our prayer that they may enter into God's memory (we say "remembering all the saints"), to enter His divine glory, and be glorified.

Please, my Christians, look at the icon of the Transfiguration of Christ. Christ is shining, His face is radiating, even His clothes are shining. Look also at the disciples who strangely aren't looking at Christ, but they are bent over while covering their faces with their hands. Why? Because they cannot bear the Light, the Taboric Light. Pentecost had not yet come. For this reason, the disciples received the Light of the Transfiguration "as they could bear", or as much as they were able and was possible for them, for they had not yet received the Grace of the Holy Spirit. And this is why the Gospel says the disciples were afraid when they saw the glory of Christ (c.f. Matt. 17:6).

But we, my beloved, have received this Light, we have received the Grace of the Holy Spirit. We received it at our Baptism. Then we took the Light, divine Light! As the grandmother said to her newly-baptized grandchild, "You are illumined, my child." This is why we carry lanterns at Baptisms, to depict this fact, that the baptized receive the Taboric Light, the Grace of the Holy Spirit. The bad thing that happens, my Christians, is that we lose this Grace of Baptism, because our works are impure. As the Holy Fathers say, and we have repeated many times, the pure and the impure cannot unite.

These things are impossible for God. Naturally! With our evil ways, and filthy thoughts and desires in our hearts, the Holy Spirit cannot abide there. Therefore, with our wicked ways after our Baptism, we lose the divine Light and become darkened. Now our purpose, as Christians, is to purify and cleanse our hearts of our sinful passions, that the divine Light may once again shine within us. "Purification" comes before "illumination". Our hearts must be purified in order for Christ, who said "I am the Light of the world" (Jn. 8:12), to come and dwell in our hearts to bring its brightening. "Illumination!"

My brethren, our spiritual life must be entirely an afterfeast of the Transfiguration of Christ: to hold this feast and struggle to achieve our purpose, namely to partake of the glory of Christ, the divine Light. All the divine events that took place for our salvation, we live and experience, brethren, in the Divine Liturgy. We also live and enjoy the Transfiguration of Christ, depending on the level of the purification of each of our hearts, in the Divine Liturgy. Yes! If someone who does not attend the Divine Liturgy asks you what you saw and took from the Divine Liturgy you attended, tell them: "We have seen the true Light, we have received the heavenly Spirit!" We witnessed the Transfiguration of Christ!

I pray, my Christians, that in this evil world that has been disfigured, we too will live transfigured, shining with the Grace of the Light of Christ. Amen. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 4:9-16 EOB

Brethren, I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we are made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and people. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You have honor, but we have dishonor. Even to this present hour, we hunger and thirst, we are naked, beaten and [we] wander from place to place! We work hard, with our own hands. When people curse us, we bless [in return]. When we are persecuted, we endure. When we are defamed, we try to conciliate. We are made as the filth of the world, as the dirt wiped off by all, even until now. I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For although you have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet [you do] not [have] many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, I became your father through the Good News. I beg you therefore, be imitators of me.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 17:14-23 EOB

At that time, when they came to the crowd, a man came to Jesus. He knelt down before him and said: "Lord, have mercy on my son! He is epileptic and

suffers terribly as he often falls into the fire and in the water. And so, I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him.” Jesus answered, “Faithless and perverse generation! How much longer must I be with you? How long must I bear with you? Bring him to me.” When Jesus rebuked it, the demon went out of the boy and he was cured from that hour. Then, the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, “Why were we not able to cast it out?” He replied, “Because of your unbelief! Amen, I tell you that if you have faith [even] like a grain of mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you! But this kind [of spirit] does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” While they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and the third day, he will be raised up.” They were extremely distressed.

Homilies on the Divine Liturgy: The Holy Anaphora

By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou

Analyzing the Divine Liturgy in these sermons, my beloved brethren, we have reached the central part of the Divine Eucharist, which is called the "anaphora" (or the "elevation"), during which through the Holy Spirit the bread and wine will be changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. We will analyze this in a few simple words today.

The prayer of the anaphora is recognized by the exhortation of the deacon "let us stand well, let us stand in fear, let us be attentive to the holy anaphora which we offer in peace." It is called an anaphora, because this prayer and sacrifice is offered not on an earthly altar, but on the heavenly altar. In fact the prayer of the anaphora begins with the apostolic blessing: "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be upon us all," and ends again with the prayer and blessing "and may the mercies of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ be with us all." The greatest events in our lives are done with the blessings of God.

Before beginning the prayer of the anaphora, the "Creed" is recited, namely the Symbol of Faith, which was compiled by the First and Second Ecumenical Synods and includes the basic doctrines in which Orthodox Christians believe, namely that God is Triune - Father and Son and the Holy Spirit - that Christ is the Word of God incarnate, that the Holy Spirit is God and proceeds from the Father, that the Orthodox Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic, that Baptism is one and is performed in the Church, that we await the resurrection of the dead and the second coming of Christ. And the Symbol of Faith is placed at this point, because only when we have the right faith can we participate in the Divine Liturgy. Heretics are excluded from it because they do not belong to the Church.

During the prayer of the anaphora there are three basic events which take place. First, a dialogue takes place between the liturgist Priest and those present to raise their minds to heaven, and then the Priest thanks God for all the benefits He has bestowed on the human race. Second, there is an existential remembrance of the Secret Supper and the liturgist utters the words of Christ: "Take, eat, this is my Body ..." and "Drink from this all of you, this is my Blood ...". Third, the whole prayer of the anaphora is a prayer of the liturgist to the Father - the First Person of the Holy Trinity - to send the Holy Spirit and change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. And indeed at that moment the Holy Spirit descends and transforms the gifts we offer into the Body and Blood of Christ. There are Saints who at this moment have seen the light of the Holy Spirit on the Holy Table. We do not see this because we do not have spiritual senses.

The Divine Liturgy is an theophany and we can liken it to the case of Moses, who ascended Mount Sinai, in the darkness, and had personal communion with God, while the people remained at the foot of the mountain. Here as well the liturgist enters the mountain of the vision of God, that is, he says the prayer of the anaphora, and the people at that time in a low voice prayerfully await in the nave of the temple chanting: "We praise you, we bless you, we give thanks to you, O Lord, and we implore you our God."

Also important is the utterance of the liturgist: "Your own of your own we offer to You in all and for all." That is, Lord, we offer some of Your gifts that You have given us - the bread and the wine - in all places where the divine Eucharist takes place at this moment and for all the benefits that you have given us. This utterance is crucial because it shows that the Divine Liturgy is intended to prepare man to offer his whole life to Christ and to enter the "spirit" of the Divine Liturgy which is the offering, the kenosis, the sacrifice, the totality of love.

May our whole life be a prayer and an effort to elevate us to God, Who has shown His love for us in various ways. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith, prove your own selves" (2 Cor. 13:5).

Glory to God! We are all called Christians; we all confess the one God in Three Persons, the living and immortal God; we were all baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity of One Essence: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; we all believe in Him Who was crucified and rose from the dead, Jesus Christ the Son of God, and, as a sign of this, sign ourselves with the Cross; we all enter the holy Church, and we pray and we entreat, we sing and we praise the holy name of God; we all listen to the holy word of God; we all commune Life and the Heavenly

Kingdom, and we say in the holy Symbol of Faith: "I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come."

Glory to God for all this and everything else! In truth, my readers, the mysteries of Christianity are most glorious and magnificent! It is great and glorious to be a Christian! But let us examine ourselves and prove ourselves -- are we truly Christians? As the Apostle exhorts us: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" (2 Cor. 13:5).

For without the faith, a Christian cannot exist. We bear the signs of Christianity, as was said above, but do we have true Christianity within us? For all external things are nothing without that which is inside, and outward signs without the actual and true thing itself are a lie and hypocrisy. We all boast of the faith, but do we do the works which correspond to faith, as the Apostle says to everyone: "Show me thy faith in thy works" (Jam. 2:18)? We have the name "Christians" from Christ; but have we crucified the flesh with its passions and desires, as is proper for Christians who believe in the crucified Christ, as the Apostle says: "Those that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:24)? Do we sense within ourselves the spiritual joy of the anointing of oil (1 Jn. 2:27)?

We believe in the Gospel, but do we live in a way that is worthy of the Gospel? We confess and we call on the true God; but do we please Him with the faith and pure conscience that He requires of us? We listen to the holy word of God; but do we heed it, and do we correct ourselves according to its rules? We commune the holy and life-creating Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ; but are we renewed by Holy Communion and do we progress towards a new spiritual personality?

Let us examine these things and the rest, and let us look at how we live, how we conduct ourselves, how we think, how we talk, how we act, with what kind of heart we go about before the God Who sees all things, how we treat one another.

And after examining ourselves in this way, let us be Christians not in name only but in truth. We became Christians by the grace of God; let us strive to have true Christianity within ourselves. We were baptized into the God-of-Three-Persons, and received the gift of sanctity and righteousness; let us strive to keep this heavenly treasure to the end.

We believe in Jesus Christ crucified; let us strive through faith to follow Him also, and to follow Him after each of us has taken up their cross. We confess and we call upon the heavenly God; let us strive also to please Him with heavenly ways of life. We listen to the word of God; let us strive also to live as it teaches us. We expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come. When we have turned away from this vain world, let us strive only for the eternal goods.

We approach the holy and heavenly Table of the Mysteries of Christ; let us strive that this heavenly and life-creating Bread might become for us life, sanctification, illumination, renewal, joy, and spiritual consolation. So, let us demonstrate our faith by our deeds; then we will be Christians not only in name, but in reality. O God! be gracious unto us and bless us, cause Your face to shine upon us, and have mercy on us: "that we may know upon the earth Your way, among all the nations Your salvation" (Ps. 66:2-3). Amen.

— St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, Wonderworker of Voronezh

Saint Tikhon (in the world Timothy) was born in 1724 into the family of the poorest clerk in the village of Korotsk (Valdai district) and soon after his birth he lost his parent. His childhood and adolescence passed in the midst of terrible poverty: sometimes he had to work all day for the inhabitants of his native village for a piece of bread. He barely escaped recruitment as a soldier and entered the Novgorod Seminary, where he later became a mentor. Some special circumstances (a miraculous salvation from mortal danger and some visions) disposed him to accept monasticism. In 1758 he was tonsured a monk with the name Tikhon. The following year he was appointed rector of the Tver Seminary, where he lectured on moral theology. Moreover, he taught in Russian, and not in Latin, as was customary before him. In addition to students, many strangers came to his lectures.

In 1761, at the age of 37, Hieromonk Tikhon, by explicit order from above, was elected bishop. For about two years he was a vicar in Novgorod and for about four years (1763-1767) he independently headed the episcopal department in Voronezh. All the time of his episcopate, he diligently preached and encouraged the priests subordinate to him to do the same. In Voronezh, from the time of paganism, a holiday was observed in honor of Yarila, combined with all sorts of atrocities. One day, the saint unexpectedly appeared on the people's square in the midst of the height of fun and began to denounce the atrocities. His word had such an effect that the holiday was no longer renewed.

In the meantime, strenuous labors upset the health of St. Tikhon. He asked to be dismissed from his post and spent the last 16 years (1767-1783) of his life in retirement in the Zadonsky Monastery. All the time, with the exception of 4-5 hours of rest, he devoted to prayer, reading the word of God, charity work and compiling soulful essays. Every day he came to the temple. At home, he often fell to his knees and, shedding tears like the worst sinner, cried out: "Lord, have mercy. Lord have mercy!" Without fail, every day he read several chapters from the Holy Scriptures (especially the prophet Isaiah), and he never went on the road without a small Psalter. All of his 400-ruble pension went to charity, and everything that he

received as a gift from friends was also sent here. Often in simple monastic clothes, he went to the nearest city (Yelets) and visited the prisoners of the local prison. He consoled them, disposed them to repentance, and then endowed them with alms. He himself was extremely non-possessive, lived among the simplest and poorest environment. Sitting down at a meager table, he often thought of the poor, who did not have food like him, and began to reproach himself for the fact that, according to his reasoning, he did little work for the Church. Then bitter tears began to flow from his eyes. Hot-tempered and quick-tempered by nature, he was surprisingly meek and gentle. He bowed to the ground to the cell-attendant, asking for forgiveness for any word that seemed offensive to him, and always tried to repay with kindness when someone inflicted any insult on him. Once, in the house of a friend, he entered into a conversation with a Voltairian nobleman and meekly, but so strongly refuted the atheist in everything, that the proud man could not stand it and, forgetting himself, struck the saint on the cheek. Saint Tikhon threw himself at his feet and began to ask for forgiveness, which irritated him. This humility of the saint had such an effect on the impudent offender that he converted to the Orthodox faith and later became a good Christian.

Saint Tikhon possessed the gift of insight and miracles, he read the thoughts of his interlocutors. In 1778, when Emperor Alexander I was born, the saint predicted many events of his reign, and in particular, that Russia would be saved, and the Invader (Napoleon) would perish. "The Lord God listened to him on many occasions," wrote St. Tikhon's cell-attendant. The saint especially loved to converse with the common people, consoled them in their hard times, helped those who were devastated. From the monastery settlement, children visited him. He taught them prayer, and after the conversation gave them money. The blessed death of St. Tikhon followed on August 13, 1783. After 63 years, his incorruptible relics were discovered, and in 1861 he was canonized as a saint. (*from tatmitropolia-ru*)

St. Radegund of France

St. Radegund was a sixth century Frankish princess, who founded the Convent of Our Lady of Poitiers. She is the patron saint of several English churches and of Jesus College, Cambridge.

In 520, Radegund was born to King Berthar, one of the three kings of Thuringia (located in present day Germany). Her uncle, Hermanfrid, killed Berthar in battle, leaving Radegund an orphan. In 531, Radegund was forced into marriage with Frankish King Clotaire, becoming one of his six wives. She bore him no children, and, after Clotaire had her brother assassinated, she turned to God, founding a monastery in Poitiers.

Radegund was extensively written about by the poet, Venantius Fortunatus, and the bishop, hagiographer, and historian, Gregory of Tours. St. Radegund died on August 13, 586. Her funeral, at which Venantius Fortunatus and Gregory of Tours attended, was three days later.

Five English parish churches are dedicated to her, and she had a chapel in the old St Paul's Cathedral, as well as in Gloucester, Lichfield, and Exeter Cathedrals. Saint Radegund's Abbey, near Dover, was founded in her honor. She is also the patron saint of Jesus College, Cambridge, which was founded on the site of the monastery of Saint Mary and Saint Radegund. (*from antiochian.org*)

Also Commemorated Today

Venerable [Maximus](#) the Confessor (662).
New Hieromartyrs John, Ioasph and Constantine priests (1918).
New Martyr [Maxim](#) Rumyantsev, Fool-for-Christ (1928)
New Hieromartyr [Seraphim](#) ([Zvezdinsky](#)), bishop of Dmitrov, Nicholas, Jacob priests and Alexis deacon (1937).(old calendar)
New Hieromartyr Basil (1942).
New Hieromartyr [Basil](#) (Preobrazhensky) bishop of Kineshma (1947).
New Monk-martyr [Joasaph](#), fool-for-Christ (1968)
“[Passion](#)” Icon of the Theotokos (1641)
Martyr [Hippolytus](#) of Rome and 18 martyrs with him, including Martyrs [Concordia](#), Irenaeus, and Abundius (258).
Venerable [Serid](#) (Seridos), abbot, of Gaza (6th c.).
Empress [Irene](#), tonsured [Xenia](#) (12th c.).
St. [Eudocia](#) the Empress (460), wife of Theodosius the Younger.
Venerable Abba [Dorotheos](#) of Gaza (*Greek*).
St. [Dositheos](#) the Submissive, disciple of Appa Dorotheos
St. [Wigbert](#), abbot of Hersfeld, English missionary to Germany (738).
Blessed [Maximus](#), Fool-for-Christ, WW of Moscow (1434)
Holy Martyr [Koronatos](#) (unk)
Virgin-martyrs [Centrolla](#) and Helen (Spain) (304)
Martyr [Cassian](#) of Imola (Italy)(c. 250)
Hieromartyr [Cassian](#), Bishop of Todi (Italy)(4th c.)
St. [Herulph](#), bishop of Langres (France)(785)
St. [Junian](#) of Mairé, hermit in Chaulnay (France)(587)
St. [Ludolph](#), Abbot of New Corvey in Westphalia (983)
St. [Murtagh](#) (Muredach), Bishop of Killala, disciple of St. Patrick (6th c)
St. [Pontian](#), Pope of Rome (235)

Social Team for August 20

Team 5 – Cooper, Mary V., Steven Watts. Thank you!

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In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Eminence Metropolitan GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri & Mt. Kenya, Bennett family, Tatyana & Slava Chumak & family, Luke & Marlena Cooper, Roberta Corson, Jon Church, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Marlene Doukas, Linda A. Georgiev, Sandi Hebel, Howl family, Helen P. Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Helen, Brian, Luke and Mia Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & family, Nicholas Pavlik, Weston Perry & family, John Reece, Mary Reed, Marge Rusnak, Rose Song, Fr. Nectarios & Ia, Mother Virginia Marie & the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, the suffering people of Ukraine, and those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)