



Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

Sun, Aug 2, 2020 - Feeding the Five Thousand

8th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 7. DORMITION FAST
Translation of the Relics of the Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen (ca. 428)



Hymns for Today

By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death. To the thief Thou didst open Paradise. For the Myrrhbearers Thou didst change weeping into joy, and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God, to proclaim that Thou art risen, // granting the world great mercy.

Thy relics have risen from the depths of the earth, like a treasury for the immortal life of all creation. The Church, rejoicing in the grace that she receives from them, duteously honors thee, O Protomartyr Stephen. // Preserve us from error and heresy by thy intercession!

The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive, for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers. Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and cry: "The Savior has come to those in faith; // enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!"

Thou wast the first to be sown on the earth by the Heavenly Husbandman, O all-praised one, and wast the first to shed thy blood on the earth for Christ, O blessed one. Thou wast the first to receive the crown of victory from Him in heaven, // O Stephen, first of the suffering God-crowned martyrs.

Epistle Reading - 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord

Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Gospel Reading - Matthew 14:14-22

And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." He said, "Bring them here to Me." Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS: *A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from Holy Trinity Orthodox Church. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament through prayer and fasting.*

THIS WEEK'S SERVICE SCHEDULE

(Sat Vespers & Sun Liturgy livestreamed on Facebook)

TODAY: 8:40 AM Hours, Divine Liturgy @ 9:00 AM

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Great Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ

WED, Aug 5: 6:30 PM Great Vespers w Lity

THURS, Aug 6: 8:50 AM 3rd Hour, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

BLESSING OF FRUITS

Bring a basket of fruit to be blessed following Divine Liturgy for the Transfiguration.

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SAT, August 8: 5:00 PM Great Vespers

SUN, August 9: 8:40 AM Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Living: Cynthia Dulsky, Theodore & Elenor Sovryda, Valletta Family, Nadine Breisch, Luke Austin, Rosalie Bagenski, Denise Meck, Sonja & Leanne Kay, Stephen & Mary Krill, Anna Hutz Lahr, Brian Cawley, Josie Bissett, Lisa & Scott Harvey, Daniel & Shannon Bissett, Rebecca King, Connie Padrezas, Delores Karas, Antonette Terry, Archpriest Daniel & Matushka Myra Kovalak, Mary DeBenedetto, Violet Filipi, Karl Pfeiffenberger, Lisa Vallone, Christopher Polk, Emma St. Romain & Infant, Catherine, Diane Welgus, Danny Gobish, Lorraine Pace, Anastasia Homick, Camden Misrahi **Departed:** Barbara Clark, Thomas Podalak, Martin Taylor, Dimitrios L., Gregory Gobish, Sky Kincaid, Kelly Purcell, Jerry Raimondi, Devon Nicewicz, Magdalena, Andrew Dutko Sr.

Altar Server Schedule

Sunday, Aug 2: Alex H, Tommy D, Andrew N

Sunday, Aug 9: Christopher D, Symeon C, Ephraim N

Sunday, Aug 16: Alec B, Kaleb D, Andrew C

THANK YOU FROM THE 2020 FOOD FESTIVAL

The 2020 Food Festival has come and gone and with that we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to each person who helped make it all happen. Our estimated

profit this year is \$9,327. There are those of you who put in countless hours of food prep, grounds prep, advertising and promoting of the event, all behind the scenes. Donations to the Festival which are so vital to its running, purchasing supplies and all the planning to keep the event as safe as possible for all involved...these are invaluable contributions. With the new format, we had to change the way we did many things including the food ordering system and pickup process. This proved to be our biggest challenge but it was met with willingness and sacrifice of many hours of work, more than we could have guessed would be needed, and those involved cannot be thanked enough. Last but not least, a huge thank you to all who supported the Food Festival with their time, talent and treasure. It could never happen if people did not show up to work or EAT all the delicious food! Once again, we have been blessed by God with a priceless gift of our church family coming together for the common goal of supporting our beloved parish.

– The Bazaar Committee and Chairs

SAYING GOODBYE TO THE MECKS! After a lifetime as residents of NEPA and members of Holy Trinity Church Denise and JP Meck are pulling up stakes and heading to new adventures in Florida at the end of this month. As many know, Denise was the Perogie Project lead and thanks to all her efforts this fundraising activity continued to be the success it has been since the beginning. To officially say goodbye to both her and JP we are planning a shrimp boil in their honor on Sunday, August 16th beginning around noon. This event will be held in and around the pavilion so that social distancing and other guidelines will be maintained. For those who do not eat seafood grilled chicken will be offered. Cost of the event will be \$10 per person. A children's menu of chicken nuggets and fries will be available for \$5 per. Please contact Diane (570-510-1394) or Sandy (571-274-5846) by August 10. In order to keep costs down we ask everyone to bring their own beverage, coolers and ice.

The Feast of the Transfiguration

Why is this important to us?

The transfiguration of Christ is one of the central events recorded in the gospels. Immediately after the Lord was recognized by His apostles as "the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the Living God," He told them that "He must go

up to Jerusalem and suffer many things . . . and be killed and on the third day be raised” (Mt 16). The announcement of Christ’s approaching passion and death was met with indignation by the disciples. And then, after rebuking them, the Lord took Peter, James, and John “up to a high mountain”—by tradition Mount Tabor—and was “transfigured before them.”

. . . and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became white as snow and behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with Him. And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is well that we are here; if you wish I will make three booths here, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” He was still speaking when lo, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is My Beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased; listen to Him.” When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces with awe. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead” (Mt 17.1–92, see also Mk 9.1–9; Lk 9.28–36; 2 Pet 1.16–18).

The Jewish Festival of Booths was a feast of the dwelling of God with men, and the transfiguration of Christ reveals how this dwelling takes place in and through the Messiah, the Son of God in human flesh. There is little doubt that Christ’s transfiguration took place at the time of the Festival of Booths, and that the celebration of the event in the Christian Church became the New Testamental fulfillment of the Old Testamental feast in a way similar to the feasts of Passover and Pentecost.

In the Transfiguration, the apostles see the glory of the Kingdom of God present in majesty in the person of Christ they see that “in Him, indeed, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,” that “in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Col 1.19, 2.9). They see this before the crucifixion so that in the resurrection they might know Who it is Who has suffered for them, and what it is that this one, Who is God, has prepared for those who love Him. This is what the Church celebrates in the feast of the Transfiguration.

Thou wast transfigured on the mount. O Christ God, revealing Thy glory to Thy disciples 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 (Troparion).

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 (Kontakion).

Besides the fundamental meaning which the event of the Transfiguration has in the context of the life and mission of Christ, and in addition to the theme of the glory of God which is revealed in all of its divine splendor in the face of the Saviour, the presence of Moses and Elijah is also of great significance for the understanding and celebration of the feast. Many of the hymns refer to these two leading figures of the Old Covenant as do the three scripture readings of Vespers which tell of the manifestation of the glory of God to these holy men of old (Ex 24.12–18; 33.11–34.8; 1 Kg 19.3–16).

Moses and Elijah, according to the liturgical verses, are not only the greatest figures of the Old Testament who now come to worship the Son of God in glory, they also are not merely two of the holy men to whom God has revealed himself in the prefigurative theophanies of the Old Covenant of Israel. These two figures actually stand for the Old Testament itself: Moses for the Law and Elijah for the Prophets. And Christ is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets (Mt 5.17).

They also stand for the living and dead, for Moses died and his burial place is known, while Elijah was taken alive into heaven in order to appear again to announce the time of God’s salvation in Christ the Messiah.

Thus, in appearing with Jesus on the mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah show that the Messiah Saviour is here, and that He is the Son of God to Whom the Father Himself bears witness, the Lord of all creation, of the Old and New Testaments, of the living and the dead. The Transfiguration of Christ in itself is the fulfillment of all of the theophanies and manifestations of God, a fulfillment made perfect and complete in the person of Christ. The Transfiguration of Christ reveals to us our ultimate destiny as Christians, the ultimate destiny of all men and all creation to be transformed and glorified by the majestic splendor of God Himself.

There is little doubt that the feast of the Transfiguration of Christ belonged first to the pre-Easter season of the Church. It was perhaps celebrated on one of the Sundays

of Lent, for besides certain historical evidence and the fact that today St Gregory Palamas, the great teacher of the Transfiguration of Christ, is commemorated during Lent, the event itself is one which is definitely connected with the approaching death and resurrection of the Saviour.

... for when they would behold Thee crucified, they would understand that Thy suffering was voluntary (Kontakion).

The feast of the Transfiguration is presently celebrated on the sixth of August, probably for some historical reason. The summer celebration of the feast, however, has lent itself very well to the theme of transfiguration. The blessing of grapes, as well as other fruits and vegetables on this day is the most beautiful and adequate sign of the final transfiguration of all things in Christ. It signifies the ultimate flowering and fruitfulness of all creation in the paradise of God's unending Kingdom of Life where all will be transformed by the glory of the Lord.

Why do we bless fruit on the feast of the Transfiguration?

On the Holy Feast-Day of Transfiguration (Metamorphosis) on August 6th (19th) our tradition calls that the Orthodox Christian faithful bring fruits and even vegetables to be blessed on this day. The most common fruit to be blessed are grapes.

The blessing of fruits i.e., grapes, apples, etc., as well as vegetables on this day, is one very beautiful custom of our Holy Church. The practice signifies the final transfiguration of all things in Christ our Savior. "It signifies the ultimate flowering and fruitfulness of all creation in the Paradise of God's Kingdom of Life where all will be transformed by the Glory of the Lord".

This is an early Christian tradition. The first week of August, on the sixth of August, the farmers used to gather the first fruits of their summer harvest (grapes, figs, etc.) and to offer thanks to God and offer them to the Church to be blessed and then to give them to the faithful present at the Divine Liturgy as a blessing to them. These fruits are called the "beginnings".

In a text from the 7th century ("the laws of the kingdom") by Emperor Constantine Porfirogenitos this tradition is described clearly: "The Emperor of

Constantinople gathers the "beginnings" ("aparches") in Chalcedon, where there are many vines, and then he waits for the Patriarch of Constantinople to come on the Holy Day of the Transfiguration of Christ, to bless the fruits and to personally hand out the grapes to the faithful.

This tradition is adhered to in various parts of Greece where they grow grapes.

Saint John Chrysostom wrote: "Plowman receives fruit from the earth not so much for his labor and diligence, as out of the goodness of God Who grows this fruit, because neither is he that plants anything, neither he that waters, but God that gives the increase".

Grapes are brought to church because they are directly connected to the Holy Eucharistic Mystery (Sacraments); that is why in the prayer for the blessing of grapes the priest says, "Bless, Lord, this new fruit of the vine which reached ripeness because Thou kindly provided god weather, drops of rain and stillness. Let eating this fruit of vine makes us joyful. And give us the honor of offering this fruit to Thee, as the gift of purging of sins, altogether with the Holy Body of Thy Christ.

In the first centuries of Christianity, the faithful brought forth to the church the fruit and crops of the new harvest: bread, wine, olive oil, incense, wax, honey, etc. Of all these offerings, only bread, wine, incense, olive oil, and wax were taken to the altar, while the rest was used for the needs of the clergy and the poor whom the church was caring for. These offerings were to express gratitude to God for all goods, but at the same time help servants of God and people in need. Until today, the consecration of bread and wine, eggs and milk and other food has been kept in the consecration of artos (bread) in the church and meals at home on Pascha. Consecration of flowers and tree branches is performed now on Palm Sunday, the days of the Holy Trinity and Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and on Sunday of the week of the Veneration of the Cross. Rice with raisins and honey are used as offering in services for the dead and remembrance repast. Proskophora is brought forth to church for proskomide (Credence) in order for the priest to perform the Offertory Service.

Source: Archangel Gabriel Orthodox Church
