

SS. PETER & PAUL

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Gospel Reading ~ Matthew 17:14-23
Epistle Reading ~ 1 Corinthians 4:9-16
Forefeast of the Transfiguration

This Week at a Glance

Mon, August 11th

9:00 am - Divine Liturgy & Blessing of Fruit

Sat, August 11th

6:00 pm - Great Vespers

Sun, August 12th

9:00 pm - 3rd & 6th Hours
 9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Thank You

A big THANK YOU to everyone who donated their time and pinching skills to make sure we had enough pierogis for our Food Festival. Thanks to your efforts, our freezers are filled. May God reward all of your dedication and hard work!

Gospel Meditation

In today's Gospel reading we have heard that God, our Lord, designates the strength of our faith as the main weapon that is able to bring the victory over evil. Our faith is not like a lifeless stone, not a precious diamond, which, though beautiful and very expensive, is still dead and insensible... Christ teaches us that our faith must be similar to a grain: though it is primarily tiny, it is alive. And, as this minute grain will eventually grow and become a big beautiful tree, our faith must also always grow and develop, and never freeze or stop in one place. Christ tells us that if even we have had faith of the size of a mustard seed, the mountains would have retreated in front of us, and we would have been able to move them from place to place...

The Lord tells His disciples about a prayer and fasting as about the most powerful means to strengthen our faith. What hidden meaning is there in the words of God that by our faith we would be able to move mountains from one place to another? Why do we need to do this? Will it help to save our souls?

Let us consider for a moment that Jesus was talking not about the physical mountains of earth and stones, but about those mountains, which rise in our hearts, the mountains of sins, accumulated during our lives? These are the very mountains that separate us from God... Then we should move away and (or, even better) make them topple into the deep sea... Only with the help of God's grace that we receive at every Church service, we are able to break down these cold and dark, lifeless rocky mountains of sin and pride.

The apostles proved to be able to overthrow these mountains of their personal sins, and then to turn the whole existing at that time human world over. Under the influence of their preaching about Jesus Christ and after their personal example demonstrating the strength of their faith (which they were ready to confess in spite of multiple and various prosecutions to the very death), many peoples were set in motion, declined the previous false beliefs and become Christians...

Candles

The tall center candles are donated in memory of **John & Katheryne Pysarchyk**.

Food Festival

We will need everyone's help to make the Food Festival a success. If you have not yet signed up for a job, please see Cecilia Falcon to do so.

Gospel Meditation (continued)

As a result, the entire ancient world was changed and a new Christian civilization, to which we all belong, was built! The devil wants to destroy this new world of God-believers that our Heavenly Father created. We can preserve it only by prayers and fasting. Our faith must constantly increase. If our faith does not grow, it will decline and eventually die. The true fast – is not when one gives up eating meat, but when one denies oneself, gives up one's sins. Real prayer – is such state of mind, when the soul every minute is turned towards God, as a radio set is tuned to the radio station. Only in this way we will be stronger than the devil, than atheism, than any other false aggressive religion! Amen!

The Transfiguration of Our Lord

The Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ is celebrated each year on August 6. The feast commemorates the transfiguration or metamorphosis of Christ on Mount Tabor, when our Lord appeared in His divine glory before the Apostles Peter, James, and John.

Biblical Story

The event of the Transfiguration is recorded in three of the four Gospels: Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-8, and Luke 9:28-36. Jesus took the Apostles Peter, James, and John with Him up upon a mountain, and while they were on the mountain Jesus was transfigured. His face shone like the sun, and His garments became glistening white. Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ, talking to Him. Peter declared how good it was for them to be there and expressed the desire to build three booths for Moses, Elijah, and Christ. This reference to the booths could imply that this occurred during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles when the Jews would be camping out in the fields for the grape harvest; for this Feast had acquired other associations in the course of its history, including the memory of the wanderings in the wilderness recorded in the Old Testament book of Exodus.

While Peter was speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them. A voice came from the cloud saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him." When the disciples heard this they fell on their faces filled with awe. Jesus came to them and told them to not be afraid. When the three looked up they saw only Jesus.

As Jesus and His disciples came down the mountain, He told them not to speak of what they had seen until He had risen from the dead.

Icon of the Feast

In the icon of the Feast of the Transfiguration, Christ is the central figure, appearing in a dominant position within a circular mandorla. He is clearly at the visual and theological center of the icon. His right hand is raised in blessing, and his left hand contains a scroll. The mandorla with its brilliant colors of white, gold, and blue represent the divine glory and light. The halo around the head of Christ is inscribed with the Greek words *Ὁ ὢν*, meaning "The One Who is".



Elijah and Moses stand at the top of separate mountain peaks to the left and right of Christ. They are bowing toward Christ with their right hands raised in a gesture of intercession towards Him. Saint John Chrysostom explains the presence of these two fathers of the faith from the Old Testament in three ways. He states that they represent the Law and the Prophets; they both experienced visions of God; and they represent the living and the dead (Elijah, the living, because he was taken up into heaven by a chariot of fire, and Moses, the dead, because he did experience death).

Below Christ are the three Apostles, who by their posture in the icon show their response to the transfiguration of Christ. James has fallen over backwards with his hands over his eyes. John in the center has fallen prostrate. Peter is kneeling and raises his right hand toward Christ in a gesture expressing his desire to build the three booths. The garments of the Apostles are in a state of disarray as to indicate the dramatic impact the vision has had on them.

The icon of the feast directs our attention toward the event of the Transfiguration and specifically to the glory of God as revealed in Christ. This event came at a critical point in the ministry of our Lord, just as He was setting out on His journey to Jerusalem. He would soon experience the humiliation, suffering, and death of the Cross. However, the glorious light of the Resurrection was revealed to strengthen His disciples for the trials that they would soon experience.

The feast also points to the great and glorious Second Coming of our Lord and the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God when all of creation will be transfigured and filled with light.