The Transfiguration of Our Lord, and God, and Saviour, Jesus Christ
Which the Holy Church celebrates on August 6

Our Lord had spoken to His disciples many times not only concerning His Passion, Cross, and Death, but also concerning the coming persecutions and afflictions that they themselves would endure. Since all these evils were near at hand, but the enjoyment of good things which they hoped to receive in their stead was yet to come, our Saviour desired to give them full assurance, evidently and openly, concerning that glory which is prepared for those who endure to the end. Therefore, fulfilling that which He had promised shortly before, that “there be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His Kingdom” (Matt. 16:28). He took His three foremost disciples and ascended Mount Tabor, where He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as the light. Suddenly, together with this dread and marvellous effulgence of light, there appeared those pinnacles of the Prophets, Moses and Elias, who spoke with the Lord Jesus concerning His saving Passion that was about to take place. Standing before Him as reverent servants, they showed that He is Lord of both the living and the dead, for Moses came forth from Hades, having died many centuries before, and Elias, as it were from heaven, whither he had been taken up while yet alive. After a little while a radiant cloud overshadowed them and out of the cloud they heard that same voice which had been heard at the Jordan at the Baptism of Christ, testifying to the Divinity of Jesus and saying: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him” (Matt. 17:5).
Such are the marvels, truly worthy of God, celebrated in this present feast, which is an image and prefiguring of the future state of the righteous, whose splendour the Lord spoke of, saying: “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun” (Matt. 13:43). It is because of this that the Kontakion of this Feast is said daily (when there is not a great feast) in the Service of the Typica in perpetual commemoration of the glory that will be the lot of the Saints. According to tradition, the Lord’s Transfiguration came to pass forty days before His Crucifixion; this is why the Transfiguration is celebrated forty days before the Exaltation of the Cross.

Rest from labour. Fish allowed.

Thou wast transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God, showing to Thy disciples Thy glory as each one could endure. Shine forth Thou on us, who are sinners all, Thy light ever-unending, through the prayers of the Theotokos, Light-bestower, glory to Thee.

On the mount Thou wast transfigured, and Thy disciples, as much as they could bear, beheld Thy glory, O Christ our God; that when they should see Thee crucified, they would know Thy Passion to be willing, and preach to the world that Thou, in truth, art the Effulgence of the Father.
A SELECTION OF HYMNS FROM THE MENAION

NOTE

If this Feast fall on a Sunday, we chant none of the hymns of the Resurrection, but all of the Feast.

VESPERS

There is no reading from the Psalter. For Lord, I have cried, we allow for six verses and chant the following Stichera, repeating the first two:

Fourth Tone. By Cosmas the Monk

BEFORE Thy Cross, O Lord, a mountain became like unto Heaven, and a cloud spread out like a tabernacle. When Thou wast transfigured and the Father bare witness to Thee, Peter with James and John were present, for they were to be seen with Thee at the time of Thy betrayal; so that having seen Thy wonders, they might not be afraid at Thy sufferings, which may we be counted worthy to worship in peace, for Thy great mercy’s sake. (Twice)

BEFORE Thy Cross, O Lord, Thou didst take the disciples up into a high mountain, and Thou wast transfigured before them, illuminating them with the rays of Thy power. For in Thy love for man on one hand, and in Thine authority on the other, Thou hast willed to show them the splendour of the Resurrection. Do Thou grant that we too in peace may be counted worthy thereof, O God, since Thou art merciful and the Friend of man. (Twice)

When Thou wast transfigured upon a high mountain, O Saviour, having with Thee the chief disciples, Thou didst shine forth with glory, to signify that they who became eminent on the height of virtues, shall also be deemed worthy of divine glory. And when Moses and Elias spake with Christ, they showed that He is the Lord of the living and the dead, and the God that spake of old through the Law and the Prophets. And the voice of the Father bare witness unto Him from a bright cloud, saying: Hear ye Him, Who by His Cross despoileth Hades, and granteth unto the dead life everlasting.
The mountain once shrouded in gloom and smoke is now honourable and holy, whereon Thy feet have stood, O Lord. For the mystery hid before the ages hath in these last times been made manifest by Thy dread Transfiguration unto Peter, John and James. Since they could not endure the radiance of Thy countenance and the brightness of Thy garments, they were borne down to the ground upon their faces; and seized with amazement, they marveled as they saw Moses and Elias speaking with Thee of the things that should befall Thee. And a voice from heaven bare witness, say in: This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. It is He that granteth the world great mercy.

Glory: both now. Plagal of Second Tone. By Anatolius

PREFIGURING Thy Resurrection, O Christ God, Thou didst take Thy three disciples, Peter, James, and John, and didst ascend upon Tabor. And when Thou wast transfigured, O Saviour, the Mount of Tabor was covered with light. Thy disciples cast themselves upon the ground, O Word, for they could not endure to look on the form that none may behold. The Angels ministered with fear and trembling, the heavens shuddered and the earth quaked, beholding upon earth the Lord of Glory.

For the Entreaty. Second Tone

CHRIST, the Light that was before the sun, goeth about incarnate upon the earth; and before the Cross, accomplishing in a manner worthy of God all things pertaining to His dread dispensation, He mystically revealeth the image of the Trinity today upon Mount Tabor. For having taken aside the three preferred disciples, Peter, James, and John, He led them up with Him; and concealing for a while the flesh He had assumed, He was transfigured before them, openly revealing the majesty of the original beauty, and not yet in full, but only as they were able to receive, having bodily eyes. For while giving them full assurance, He also spared them, lest at the sight they should lose their very lives. And He brought forward the most eminent of the Prophets, even Moses and Elias, who also, as far as in them lay, bare witness to His Divinity, and that He is the true Effulgence of the Father’s Essence, the Lord of the loving and the dead. Wherefore, a cloud compassed them round about like a tent; and from above, the voice of the Father resounded out of the cloud, bearing witness and saying: This is My beloved Son, Whom I changelessly begat from the womb before the morning star; Him have I sent to save them that be baptized unto the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and who faithfully confess that the one Dominion of the Godhead is indivisible. Hear ye Him. Do Thou Thyself, therefore, O Christ God, Thou Friend of man, make us also to shine with the light of thine
The Transfiguration of Christ

unapproachable glory, and show us forth as worthy heirs of Thy Kingdom, which hath no end; for Thou art supremely good.

*For the Aposticha, the following Stichera:*

He that once spake in figures unto Moses on Mount Sinai: saying, I am He Who Is, today was transfigured upon Mount Tabor before the disciples. Having taken on the nature of man, He showed in Himself the original beauty of its image. And bringing Moses and Elias into His presence as witnesses of this grace, He made them partakers of the gladness, foretelling His departure by the Cross, and His saving Resurrection.

*Verse:* Thine are the heavens, and Thine is the earth; the world and the fullness thereof hast Thou founded.

DAVID, the ancestor of God, forseeing in the Spirit Thy coming unto men in the flesh, O Only-begotten Son, from afar calleth out: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy Name. For when Thou wentest up into this mountain with Thy disciples O Saviour, Thou wast transfigured, making the nature that was darkened in Adam to shine like lightning once again, and transforming it into the glory and brightness of Thy Divinity. Wherefore, we cry unto Thee: O Creator of all, Lord, glory be to Thee.

*Verse:* Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy Name.

WHEN the foremost Apostles saw the uncontainable flood of Thy light upon the Mount of the Transfiguration, O beginningless Christ, and Thy Godhead unto which no man may approach, they were changed with a divine ecstasy; and when the bright cloud shone upon them round about, they heard the Father’s voice confirming the mystery of Thine assumption of man’s nature. For even after Thine incarnation, Thou art One, the only-begotten Son and Saviour of the world.

*Glory, both now.* Plagal of Second Tone

TODAY upon Mount Tabor, O Lord, Thou hast shown the glory of Thy divine form unto Thy preferred disciples, Peter, John, and James. For they saw Thy garments flashing like the light and Thy countenance brighter than the sun; and since they could not bear to look upon Thine unendurable radiance, they fell to the ground, in no wise able to lift up their gaze. For they heard a voice bearing witness from on high: This is My beloved Son, Who is come into the world to save man.
MATINS

After the First Reading from the Psalter, the following Sessional Hymn:

Fourth Tone. Joseph was amazed

CLEARLY showing the exchange * that Adam’s mortal race shall make * with Thy glory at Thy dread * and second coming on the earth, * Thou wast transfigured, O Saviour, upon Mount Tabor. * Elias great in zeal * and Moses spake with Thee. * Thou didst call Thy three disciples to Thyself, * who saw Thy glory, O our Master, * and were amazed at Thy dazzling light. O Thou Who shonest Thy light upon them, * grant our souls light now also.

Glory; both now. Repeat the Same

After the Second Reading from the Psalter, the following Sessional Hymn:

Same Melody

HIGH on Tabor’s holy mount * Thou wast transfigured, O Christ God; * and a cloud of brilliant light * and spread out like a tent, * and with Thy glory, it covered Thy three Apostles. * Hence, they looked to the ground, * not bearing to behold the great brightness of * the unapproachable * splendour and glory of Thy countenance, * O Saviour Jesus, our Timeless Lord. * O Thou Who shonest Thy light upon them, * grant our souls light now also.

Glory; both now. Repeat the Same

OIKOS

ARISE, ye sluggards, wallow not forever on the ground; ye thoughts, which bend my soul toward the earth, bestir yourselves, and mount up to the height of divine ascent. Let us run to Peter and the sons of Zebedee, and let us go with them to Mount Tabor, that with them we may see the glory of our God and hear His voice; for when they had heard it from on high, they preached the Effulgence of the Father.

SYNAXARION

* On the sixth of this month we commemorate the divine Transfiguration of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Verses

Tabor was glorified above earth’s every region
When it looked upon God’s nature shining in glory.

On the sixth Christ transformed His form as a man.
The Transfiguration of Christ

* On this day we commemorate the Holy Martyred Children Justus and Pastor of Alcalá de Henares in Spain, the brethren, who were tortured and beheaded under Diocletian.

Verses

Leaving teacher and school books, Thy little Martyrs
Run with joy to the test of their faith, O Saviour.

* On this day we commemorate the holy Martyred Children Justus and Pastor of Alcalá de Henares in Spain, the brethren, who were tortured and beheaded under Diocletian.

* On this day we commemorate the holy New Martyr Eudocia and four other Virgin Martyrs near Sarov, who were slain by the atheists in the year 1919.

Unto Christ God be glory and dominion unto the ages. Amen.

EXAPOSTILARION

Third Tone. The Original Melody

O CHANGELESS Light of the Light of * Thine unbegotten Begetter, today, O Word, have we now seen * in Thy Light’s manifestation * the Father and Holy Spirit * as Light on Tabor, * guiding with light all creation. (Thrice)

For the Praises we allow for four verses and chant the following Stichera, repeating the first one:

Fourth Tone. Thou who was called from on high

BEFORE Thy ven’rable Cross and willing Passion, * taking the divine disciples whom Thou hadst preferred, * O Master, Thou wentest up with them * into Mount Tabor, * wishing to show them Thy glory openly. * And as they all looked on Thee transfigured wondrously * and shining forth brighter than the sun, * they cast themselves down, * being amazed at Thy might and sovereignty; * and they cried out: Thou art the Timeless light * and the Father’s Effulgence, though Thou, O Christ, * of Thine own will, without change, art made manifest now in the flesh. (Twice)

O THOU Who art God the Word before the ages, * Who, as with a garment, coverest Thyself with light, * Thou wast transfigured before Thy three * elect disciples, * as Thou, O Word, shonest brighter than the sun. * Moses and Elias stood on either side of Thee, * making it plain that Thou art the Lord * both of the living and the dead; and they greatly glorified * Thy tender mercy, Thine ineffable * dispensation for us, and Thy very great * condescension, whereby Thou * hast saved all the world once lost in sins.
THOU Who wast born of a virgin cloud aforetime * and becamest flesh and didst ascend Mount Tabor’s height, * Thou wast transfigured thereon, O Lord * and didst encompass * Thyself about with a brilliant cloud of light. * Then as Thy disciples stood with Thee, there came the voice * of Thy Begetter, proclamation Thee * His own belov’d Son, * truly of one essence and one throne with Him. * And Peter, awestruck, cried aloud to Thee: * It is good to be here, O most merciful * Benefactor and Saviour, * and in wonder knew not what he said.

Glory; both now. Plagal of Fourth Tone. Byz

CHRIST took Peter, James, and John, into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His radiance was white as the light. And there appeared Moses and Elias talking with Him. And a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said: This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.

The Great Doxology and the remainder of Matins.

And the brethren are anointed with holy oil.

Let us lift up the eyes of our understanding to the Word Who now sits, with His Body, above the vaults of heaven. And He Who sits in divine splendour on the right hand of majesty utters these words to us as if from afar, “If anyone wants to stand in the presence of this glory, let him imitate Me as far as He can, and follow the way and manner of life I taught on earth.”

Saint Gregory Palamas Homily Thirty-five (18) Another on the Transfiguration of the Lord.
Our Transfiguration in Christ

"Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (I Peter 2:9)

The Lord Jesus Christ is, as the Church confesses in the Creed, “Light of Light, true God of true God.” He is “begotten of the Father before all ages.” Before the light created for this world in this age, before the Prophet Moses could lift his pen and write, “there was evening and there was morning, Day One” Christ eternally shines forth as uncreated Light of Light. When we chant, “Christ hath today transformed * the quenched and darkened nature of Adam on Mount Tabor; * and making it to shine, He hath deified it wondrously,” we confess, in His Transfiguration, the gift and source of our Transfiguration. If we so will, all

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1 The Gospel narratives of the Transfiguration of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ are found in Saint Matthew 17: 1-9; Saint Mark 9: 2-10 and Saint Luke 9: 28-36. The Lord’s Transfiguration occurred Forty days before His Crucifixion. The Church waits to celebrate the Lord’s Transfiguration until Forty Days before the Feast of the Exaltation of the Venerable Cross on September 14/27; otherwise we would be celebrating the Feast of the Transfiguration during the Great Fast. Saint John does not include the Transfiguration of Christ in his Gospel, even though he was present with Saint Peter and his brother Saint James, because, “After examining the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke from beginning to end, John confirmed that they had recorded the truth” as Saint Sophronius narrates, so there was no need to reiterate, 32 years after the Lord’s Ascension, what they had written.

2 Gen. 1: 3-5.

3 Cf. Saint Basil Hexaemeron 1:6

4 Holy Transfiguration August 6, Small Vespers: Aposticha, Menaion, p.39.
the days of our lives as Orthodox Christians could be a prayer to be “deemed worthy of the glory that transcendeth light.”⁵ We find consolation in the promise that God “gives prayer to him who prays” (I Sam. 2:9 LXX).

Saints Moses and Elias found “the glory that transcendeth light” in that day when the prophecy, “Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy Name”⁶ was fulfilled in Christ’s Transfiguration. Since Christ promised His disciples, “of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Kingdom of God”⁷ “the glory that transcendeth light,” the Kingdom of God, was made manifest on Mount Tabor. Could the regular light of day illuminate the Prophets Moses, who has no body, and Elias, who, as it were, was caught up into heaven? The uncreated Light, God Himself in His Divine Energies, provided that illumination. Is this light the radiance of the Divine Essence? The Prophet Jeremias assures us that this cannot be the case, “For who has stood in the substance and essence of God?”⁸ In His Transfiguration Christ made “the nature that was darkened in Adam to shine like lightning once again, and transform[ed] it into the glory of the brightness of [His] Divinity.”⁹ But when the disciples entered into the bright cloud “they could not bear to look upon Thine unendurable radiance, they fell to the ground, in no wise able to lift up their gaze”¹⁰ No man has seen the Divine Essence any time,¹¹ but we can “make known and praise the beneficent [energies] of the Godhead.”¹² The Divine

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⁶ Ps. 88:12 (LXX). This text is a Prophesy of Christ, cf. Aposticha, 2nd Stichera. Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ.

⁷ Luke 9:27. St. Mark writes, “Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power” (Mk 9:1).

⁸ Jer. 23: 18 LXX Alexandrinian text.

⁹ Aposticha, Second Stichera. [Virtual Parish Editor]

¹⁰ Aposticha, Glory.

¹¹ Jn. 1:18a. This is “the unrevealed of the Godhead ... is beyond mind and matter” and “there is no trace of those who have penetrated to Its hidden infinitude” On the Divine Names 1:2, 3; St. Dionysius the Areopagite tr. James Parker 1897-1899.

¹² On the Divine Names 1:4, Parker, p.5. The text reads, “make known and praise the beneficent progressions of the Godhead.” We have substituted, from the vocabulary of Saint Basil the Great and later Saints, the term ‘energies’ because there is no change whatsoever in the meaning of the two terms, ‘progressions’ and ‘energies.’ The latter terminology is what the Church has consistently used since Saint Basil’s time.
energies, or actions, of the Lord do enter into our souls and bodies so that there still are those who appear like Saint Stephen the First Martyr who gave testimony of Christ before a council of Jews “And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel” (Acts 6:15).

In the Matins for the Feast of the Transfiguration, both of the Sessional Hymns close with the prayer, “Grant our souls light now also”\(^\text{13}\) and the Troparion of the Feast prays for us all, “Shine forth Thou on us who are sinners all Thy light ever unending.” How might we gain this uncreated light, this deifying power; how is it that we, as Orthodox Christians, are able to share God all God’s Light with Him?

Since it is always best to begin at the beginning, let us act on the advice of Saint Isaac the Syrian when he writes, “Of every good wrought within you noetically and in secret, be certain that baptism and faith have been the mediators whereby you received it; through these you were called by our Lord Jesus Christ to His good labours, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, honour, thanksgiving and worship unto the ages. Amen.”\(^\text{14}\) Saint Dionysius has a special word for the Baptismal Mystery; that word is ‘Enlightenment.’\(^\text{15}\) In Mystery of Enlightenment we receive the uncreated and life-giving light of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. We are

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\(^{13}\) Matins, Sessional Hymns, *The Menaion* p. 43.


bathed in the light\(^{16}\) of the Lord Whose Father, while He hung on the Cross “for us men and for our salvation,”“wrapped the visible world in darkness.”\(^{17}\)

In the three immersions of Orthodox Baptism, two things are revealed to and within the Christian: First he is Baptized into the Divine Name of the Father and of The Son and of the Holy Spirit. In the power of that Name he is given a new name (Rev. 2:17), his Baptismal name. Second, in this same triple immersion, he participates in the three day death and burial of Christ after His death on the Cross “for us men and for our salvation.” He emerges from the Baptismal font Risen in Christ, then he is Sealed with the Holy Spirit, after which he is tonsured in the name of the Holy Trinity and offers his shorn locks to God as a first offering to Him. The Christian does this as “a new creature.”\(^{18}\) Finally, as purged of all his sins, and with “a well of water springing up into everlasting life”\(^{19}\) bubbling up within him, he partakes of the Body and Blood of Our Lord and God Jesus Christ in the knowledge that “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.”\(^{20}\) Born anew “of water and of the Spirit”\(^{21}\) in God, named anew, and having been enabled to “taste and see that the Lord is good”\(^{22}\) in the mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ, the Christian is now enabled to dwell in God and, in His divine energies, which are God Himself, God desires to dwell in him for evermore. In this way is all prophecy fulfilled: He died our death that we might live His life.

How might the Christian order his life so as to preserve and to grow in the ineffable gift of uncreated light granted to him in his holy Baptism? Our first clue

\(^{16}\) Some years ago, in the Cathedral Parish of Saint Nectarios in Seattle, Washington where Father Neketas Palassis is Rector, Father Neketas was administering the mystery of Illumination to a lady. The prayer “That there may come upon this water the purifying operation of the super-substantial Trinity, let us pray to the Lord” had been read together with all the other prayers. The candidate for Baptism was just about to enter the water, but she hesitated once, and then once again. Father Neketas asked her to go ahead and step into the Baptismal Font. She replied, “How can I? There is a ring of fire around it.”

And to our God be glory.


\(^{18}\) Gal. 6:15

\(^{19}\) Jn. 4:14

\(^{20}\) Jn. 6:53

\(^{21}\) Jn. 3:5

\(^{22}\) Ps. 33:8 LXX
comes from Ecclesiasticus, “He that feareth the Lord will repent from his own heart.”

Blessed is the man who, with prayer and fasting, puts himself into the hands of Father John the Romanian who lived in our times as a pioneer in the Church’s struggle against the heresy of Ecumenism. His incorrupt relics await our veneration in the Monastery of Saint George of Hozeva nestled in the north wall of the precipitous ravine leading down from the Brook Kedron to the Dead Sea.

With the Prophet David we pray, “My steps do Thou direct according to Thy saying” it may help us to read the following taken from Readings and Meditations on the Divine Scripture by Saint John in the light of the following text: “Follow...holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”

“This is the will of the Holy Spirit, to be His beloved in continual reality. The Spirit of God does not dwell in those who live in rest because the Most Good God wished that His beloved servants should not have rest in this life, but rather live in suffering, difficulties, worries, poverty, and nakedness, in solitude and debts, in sicknesses and defamations, in battles and crushing of heart, with sickly body and image detested by others, in a state which does not compare to other people's, and a lonely, peaceful, and quiet dwelling, completely invisible to men and free of anything that produces earthly consolation. Therefore, these people weep, and the world laughs; these sigh, but the world enjoys; these fast but the world amuses itself. During the day, they wear themselves out; and, during the night, they prepare for deprivation. There are some who offer themselves to weariness voluntarily and also submit to afflictions; some are persecuted, while others were killed, and some hid in cellars. In them was fulfilled the word that says, 'You will have afflictions, but in Me you will have joy,' because the Lord knows that the ones who live in rest cannot remain in His love. Therefore, Christ the Saviour has prevented these from rest and satisfaction. He Whose love is more powerful than death of the body wanted to show also in us the power of His love. Amen.”

Saint John the Romanian Save Us.

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23 Ecclesiasticus (Σοφία Σειραχ) 21:6b LXX
24 Ps. 118:133 LXX
25 Heb. 12:14
The Incorrupt Relics of Saint John the Romanian are venerated by his Disciple Fr. Ioanichie.