

TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST

August 6th (19th)

Our Ukrainian Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord on August 6th on the Gregorian calendar and on August 19th on the Julian calendar. In the Gospel of St. Matthew we read: "Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; His face shone like the sun and His clothes became white as light." (17:1) Sacred Tradition of the early Church, already in the 4th century, identifies the "high mountain" as Mount Tabor. The early Church Fathers had referred to the transfiguration of Our Lord as "His second epiphany" or manifestation of His divinity.

In Eastern Catholic and Orthodox thought, the Transfiguration shows forth humanity in the splendor of its original form. The Transfiguration reveals the possibility of humanity's theosis. Another word for theosis is deification, which is a transformative process whose aim is likeness to or union with God.

The tropar for the Prefeast of the Transfiguration tells us that "The Master goes up Mount Tabor to reveal the splendorous beauty of His divinity." The Kondak for the Prefeast tells us: "Today the whole human race begins to reflect the divine splendor of the transfiguration and with joy cries out: Christ is transfigured, bringing salvation to all."

The tropar for the Feast tells us that Christ was transfigured on the Mount and showed to His disciples as much of His glory as they could possibly bear." The kondak for the Feast tells us that "when they look upon Your being crucified, they will understand that You suffer freely ... (and) that You are indeed the radiant reflection of the Father."

It is a tradition in our Church to bless fruit on this Holy Feast. The prayer for the blessing of fruit is done towards the end of the Divine Liturgy. The priest asks the Lord God to be "pleased to accept the offerings of us, Your servants. Place them among Your everlasting treasures. Grant us an abundance of earthly things along with all that is beneficial for our well-being. Bless these fruits. Grant health of soul and body to all who partake of them. For glorified is Your Kingdom and blessed is Your Name, of the Father, and of the

Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever and ever.”

Then with the sprinkling of holy water on the fruits, the priest prays: “These fruits are blessed and sanctified by the sprinkling of this holy water in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Rev. D. George Worschak