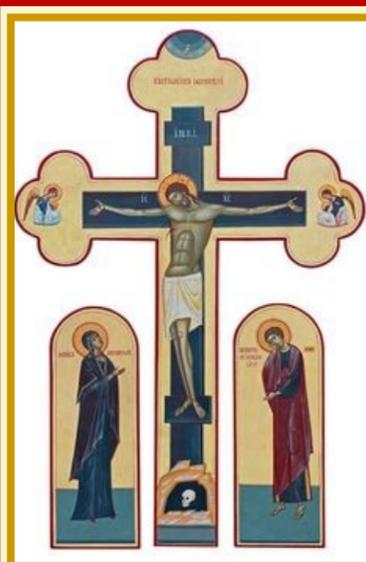


Scripture Readings

EPISTLE Romans 12:6-14 Brethren, having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

GOSPEL Matthew 9:1-8 At that time, getting into a boat Jesus crossed over and came to His own city. And behold, they brought to Him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith He said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" - He then said to the paralytic, "Rise, take up your bed and go home." And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

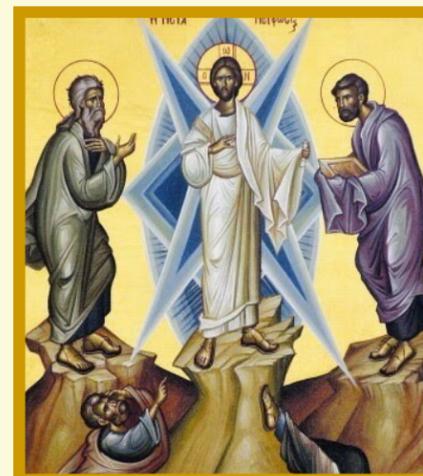
Gospel Reflection: The Month of Three Graces



St. John of Damascus (675-749) described eloquently the manner in which the early Church Fathers approached the Cross: "We venerate the Cross of Christ, by which the power of the demons and the deceit of the evil one were destroyed." Following this tradition, Orthodox Christians through the centuries have consistently celebrated the Cross as an emblem of victory, not defeat. Deeply rooted in Scripture and the writings of the Church Fathers, this emphasis is manifest in Orthodoxy's liturgical traditions. Again and again, the Cross is venerated as power, having the spiritual force to transform our lives and point the way to the holiness of the One crucified and resurrected. The redemptive power yielded by the Holy Cross which we carry in procession today conquers evil within our hearts and souls, vanquishes sickness, and forgives sin. The Apostle Paul made it even clearer: "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1:23-24) St. Justin Martyr boldly writes in the second century: "The concealed power of God was Christ Jesus on the Cross." The Cross of the Lord is power-filled. Yet apart from the Lord Himself, from where does this bloody gallows derive its power? In the Gospel of St. Mark, we read: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his

life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel's will save it." Jesus tells us the power of the Cross comes from self-denial, from taking up our burden and following Him. It is the power of ceasing to cater to our ever-swelling egos, and of understanding that self-centeredness and self-importance are spiritual dead-ends. It is here that the Lord calls us to "take up our cross" in the renunciation of pride and self-absorption. This is truly difficult, very exacting, and even painful. It goes against our natural inclination and bids us to become humble, living from the inside out rather than from the outside in. Let us heed seriously Jesus' proclamation: "For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when He comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." It is for us to surrender our ego, to genuinely try to abandon selfishness and self-preoccupation, to rid ourselves of the passions that infect our souls and of the tendency to rationalize Jesus' teachings as mere suggestions or inspirational poetry. We must not be ashamed of Him and His words, or we risk sinking ever deeper into what He refers to as "this adulterous and sinful generation." There is enormous power in the Cross of Christ: power to change, power to heal, power to make right one's heart and soul. It is the power of life and the power which overcame death once and for all. Go to the Cross of Christ and lose yourself in it. We begin the holy month of August anticipating three graces: the grace of the power of healing and forgiveness in the Cross (Aug. 1), the grace of the revelation of Christ on the Mount of the Transfiguration where we receive a glimpse of Jesus transformed (Aug. 6), and the grace of the Theotokos' profound humility in her Holy Dormition (Aug. 15), as she leaves this earth having lived a Christian life in obedience and relative silence. These three moments of grace reflect the dynamics of Christian salvation – forgiveness of sin, spiritual transformation, and obedience to God. Let us give thanks for the three graces and live our lives as did the Mother of God, reflecting the life of Him who gave His all that we might forever live!

Sermon on the Feast of the Transfiguration by St. Gregory Palamas



THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD
Friday, August 6: Orthros 8:30 AM, Divine Liturgy 9:30 AM
Followed by the Blessing of Grapes/Fruit

"Now is the favorable time; this is the day of salvation, God's new and eternal day, which is not measured by hours, which does not get longer or shorter, which is not interrupted by night, since it is the day of the Sun of Righteousness with whom there is no alteration nor shadow of change. Through this day, by the Father's decree and the Holy Spirit's cooperation, He benevolently shed His radiance on us and led us out of darkness into His wonderful light; and since He is the Sun that knows no setting, He will continue to shine upon us forever. But because He is the Sun of Righteousness and of truth, He will not shine upon or be clearly recognized by those who admire falsehood or who are unrighteous in the way they address God or in their actions. He shows himself, however, to those who act righteously and love the truth and believe in Him, and he gladdens them with His splendor.

As Scripture says; Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright. And so, prophesying, the Psalmist also sings to God: Tabor and Hermon will rejoice in your Name, foretelling the joy which the transfiguration on the mountain would one day bring to those who witnessed it. Now Isaiah says: Loosen every unjust bond, untie the knots of forced transactions, tear up every unjust contract. Then what will happen? Your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your health rapidly return; your righteousness shall go before you and the glory of God shall cover you. Moreover, if you put an end to the yoke of oppression, the pointing finger and the complaining word and generously give bread to the hungry and relief to the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness and your night be as bright as midday. For this Sun makes all those it shines upon into other suns; The righteous shall shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let us have done with the works of darkness, then and practice the works of light, in order not only to live decently as we should on such a day, but also to become children of the day. And come, let us go up the mountain where Christ became resplendent to see what took place there; or rather, when we have become children of the day and are worthy of such a day, at the appropriate time the Word of God will Himself lead us up. But now I exhort you to make every effort to raise the eye of your mind toward the light of the gospel message, so that you may in the meantime be transformed by the renewal of your minds and, by drawing the divine radiance down upon yourselves from heaven, come to share in the glory of the Lord whose face shone like the sun today on the mountain."

THE DORMITION FAST



The Dormition Fasting period begins today and extends through Great Vespers of the Feast of the Dormition on August 14. In light of the obedience of the Most Holy Theotokos to her Son, let us faithfully prepare ourselves for her Dormition by abstaining from meat and dairy and through finding good works to do for someone in our lives. The Ecclesiastical Calendar indicates the strict fasting days and the days when wine and fish are permitted.



The Enthronement of St. Gregory Palamas

For the Blessed Repose

Hristina Athanasakis (6 Months)

May she rest in peace and rise in glory,
and may her memory be eternal!

Save and Protect, O Lord,

His Eminence Metropolitan Panteleimon of Antioeos,
His Eminence Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia,
Constantina Speris, Anatoly Seraphim, Megan, Patrick, Paul, Doris, Shelika, Nicole, Ourania Mantzouranis, Dean, Crystal Franz, Jesse Haskins

PARISH MINISTRIES

BIBLE STUDY: The Bible Study sessions will continue until the Epistle to the Romans has been completed. It is held on Thursdays at 10:30 AM and 7:00 PM. Sessions are on ZOOM. All are welcome to join this important study! Please bring your Bibles to each session.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: Every Monday at noon, fifteen-minute reflections live-streamed through the Orthodox Christian Network at <https://www.facebook.com/MyOCN/>.

PARISH ACTIVITIES

LIGHT A CANDLE: Please make wax and red glass candle offerings and tray offerings at <https://stgeorge.org/livestream/> - thank you for your continued love and generous support!

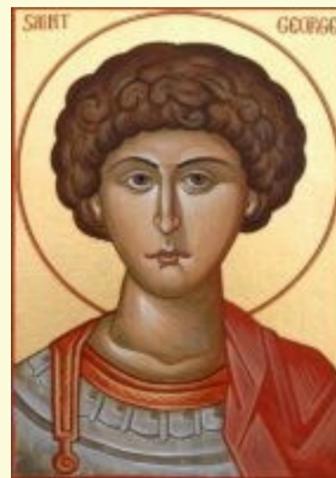
ST. GEORGE MISSION TEAM: We are currently collecting backpacks and school supplies for donation to "Volunteers of America," which will distribute them to help young students in need in our local communities to succeed at school. Please drop off all donations by Aug. 15 in the boxes at the church entrance closest to the Grand Hall. For information, contact Athena Kaiser at avkmail@verizon.net or (240) 498-0870.

YAL: Please join the St. George community after church on Sunday, August 15th to celebrate the Dormition of our most Holy Theotokos with a traditional Greek-style Panigiri (including Greek food, music, and dance)! Feel free to share this with family and friends and if there are any questions, please reach out to YAL@stgeorge.org.



Prayer to the Theotokos Holy Witness to the Cross of Christ

Most Holy Theotokos, you witnessed the passion and death of your only Son, thus fulfilling the prophecy of the aged Simeon that a sword of sorrow will pierce your heart. Rejoice Mother of the Savior, for He died on the Cross but has risen from the dead and thus destroyed sorrow and death itself! Pray to your Risen Son for us that we surrender our egos as you did and follow the counsel you gave at the Wedding of Cana: "Do whatever He tells you." O Mother of the Word Incarnate pray always for us that we may be faithful to your Risen Son's call to bear our own Cross everyday.
Amen!



THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE

Rev. Fr.
Dimitrios J. Antokas,
Presiding Priest
FrAntokas@stgeorge.org



LIFT HIGH THE
CROSS, THE
LOVE OF CHRIST
PROCLAIM
TILL ALL THE
WORLD ADORE
HIS SACRED
NAME.

7701 Bradley Boulevard,
Bethesda, MD 20817
www.stgeorge.org
Tel: 301-469-7990

SUNDAY OF THE PROCESSION OF THE HOLY CROSS 6TH SUNDAY OF ST. MATTHEW

August 1, 2021



Resurrectional Apolytikion Plagal 1

Let us the faithful give praise and worship to the Logos, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation; for of His own goodwill he consented to ascend the cross in the flesh and endured death and raised the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

Apolytikion to St. George

O Trophy-Bearer, Great Martyr George, who freed captives, supported the poor, healed the sick, was a champion of kings, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved!

Ἀπολυτίκιον

Ὡς τῶν αἰχμαλώτων ἐλευθερωτῆς, καὶ τῶν πτωχῶν ὑπερασπιστῆς,
ἀσθενούντων ἰατρός, βασιλέων ὑπέρμαχος, Τροπαιοφόρε Μεγα-
λομάρτυς Γεώργιε, πρέσβευε Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ,