

# ***Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church***

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## ***The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost***

***(08.14.2022)***

### **Matthew 14:22-34**

And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God. And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret. *(KJV)*

Believers seek peace and reassurance in a world full of uncertainty. Personal illness in the family, rising inflation and violent crime in the community can be causes of concern.

Winds of war blow across the world. Political controversy and gun violence have become common in America. Peace and order are desired and necessary for a stable and orderly life.

God's Holy Church provides the necessary place for seeking peace. The presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and Christ's teachings offer the reassurance necessary for believers.

The current Gospel speaks about the tossing waves of the sea where the disciples were located. The Lord Jesus Christ was not deterred by the tossing waves.

The Lord Jesus Christ was a calm and reassuring presence when the waves were heaving. Jesus Christ is the strong, certain and calming presence when life seems tumultuous.

Jesus Christ is ever-present for believers having Christ firmly in the mind, the heart and the soul. When illness strikes unexpectedly, when an accident or tragedy occurs, Jesus Christ is ever-present to lead the believer to peace.

Jesus Christ's love for each person is firm and irrevocable. Jesus Christ is within reach of each person. God's Holy Church offers the life-renewing and soul enriching teachings and presence of Jesus Christ.

Hope in Jesus Christ is always possible and beneficial. Hope arose in the Holy Apostle Peter when he saw Jesus. Jesus ultimately saved Peter when Peter's faith faltered.

The Lord Jesus Christ will grasp the hands of believers reaching out to Him in today's world. Life's circumstances may be cause for personal unease. Jesus Christ is always the certainty in times of uncertainty.

The wind eventually ceased in the present Gospel. The disciples survived the tumult in the ship in rough waters. Jesus Christ provided a reassuring presence and had told them not to be afraid.

Faith in Jesus Christ and the presence of Christ dispels fear in believers. Confidence in Jesus Christ is always beneficial when the believers have strong faith and follow the ways and teachings of Christ.

Love for Christ increases as the believers learn more about Christ. Learning about Christ is unending. The Holy Gospel proclaimed in the Divine Liturgy facilitates the unending learning and growth in Christ.

Christian growth is to occur throughout life from the time of Holy Baptism until departure from this life. Keeping the mind, heart and soul focused on Christ and immersed in Christ enable growth to occur.

The disciples in the boat learned lasting lessons from seeing Jesus during the time of rough waters. The disciples' learned Jesus is the presence of peace in difficult times.

Jesus' ability to walk on the sea was verified and observed by the disciples. When the disciples remained focused on Christ, they eventually experienced peaceful waters and came safely to the shore.

Believers do well to keep Jesus Christ dear to the heart, mind and soul during the days of earthly life. Sooner or later difficulties arise in life. Jesus' presence in life assures the believer of peaceful travel through stormy waters.

The disciples' experience with Jesus on the stormy sea caused them to recognize Jesus as the Son of God. Attentive believers benefitting from Jesus each day in life do well to embrace and love Jesus as the Son of God.

Thank God for the Church offering the Divine Liturgy and the Holy Gospel around the world. Thank God for the presence and reassurance of Jesus Christ in the difficult times of life.

Jesus is always present. Jesus merits constant expressions of gratitude. Praying without ceasing to Jesus each day keeps the believer united with Christ and prepared for adversities.

Life is enriched and fulfilled when the believer is constantly united with Jesus Christ. Fasting, prayer, repentance, confession and communion keep the believer's relationship with Jesus Christ strong and lasting.

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*The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost. Procession of the Honourable Cross. Holy Maccabean Martyrs. Beginning of the Dormition Fast. August 1/August 14, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic*

*The Prologue from Ochrid*  
*St Nikolai of Zhicha*  
*(08.19.2022)*

**1. THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST**

In the third year of His preaching, the Lord Jesus often spoke to His disciples of His approaching passion, and also of His glory following His suffering on the Cross. So that His impending passion would not totally weaken His disciples, and so that no one would fall away from Him, He, the All-wise, wanted to show them a portion of His divine glory before His passion. For that reason, He took Peter, James and John with Him and went by night to Mt.

Tabor, and was there transfigured before them: *And His face shone as the sun and His garments became white as snow* (Matthew 17:2). Moses and Elias [Elijah], the great Old Testament prophets, also appeared beside Him. Seeing this, His disciples were stunned. Peter said: *Lord, it is good for us to be here: if You will, let us make here three tabernacles; one for You, one for Moses and one for Elias* (Matthew 17:4). While Peter still spoke, Moses and Elias departed, and a bright cloud overshadowed the Lord and His disciples, and there came a voice from the cloud saying: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear Him* (Matthew 17:5). Hearing the voice, the disciples fell face down on the ground as though dead, and remained that way, prostrate in fear, until the Lord came to them and said: *Arise, and be not afraid* (Matthew 17:7). Why did the Lord take only three disciples onto Tabor, and not all? Because Judas was not worthy to behold the divine glory of the Teacher, Whom he will betray; and the Lord did not want to leave him alone at the foot of the mountain, so that the betrayer would not, because of this, justify his betrayal. Why was our Lord transfigured on a mountain and not in a valley? So as to teach us two virtues: love of labor and godly-thoughts--for climbing to the heights requires labor, and the heights themselves represent the elevation of our thoughts to the things of God. Why was our Lord transfigured at night? Because the night is more suitable than the day for prayer and godly-thoughts; and the night, by its darkness, conceals all the beauty of the earth, and reveals the beauty of the starry heavens. Why did Moses and Elias appear? In order to destroy the Jewish fallacy that Christ was one of the prophets--Elias or Jeremiah or some other. That is why He appeared as a King, above the prophets, and that is why Moses and Elias appeared as His servants. Until then, our Lord had manifested His divine power many times to the disciples; but on Mt. Tabor He manifested His Divine Nature. This vision of His Divinity, and the hearing of the heavenly witness to His being the Son of God, must have served the disciples in the days of the Lord's passion--in the strengthening of a steadfast faith in Him and in His final victory.

## HYMN OF PRAISE

### THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

Where Israel defeated Sisera,  
There also, did deign to go, the Heavenly King,  
To pray in nightly vigils,  
The glory of His Transfiguration, to manifest,  
And the faith of His followers, to confirm  
In His eternal victory as Victor.  
There, with divine light, He shone forth,  
Dispelled the thick darkness, and illuminated Tabor.

The Light, long concealed within Himself,  
Which He had shed upon the world in brief flashes,  
In abundant rays, now burst forth--  
Joyful rays, sweet rays--  
The brilliance of His humanity, to reveal to heaven,  
And to reveal to earth and men the truth of His Divinity.  
Let heaven, its Messenger, see;  
Let the earth recognize God, the Savior.

### REFLECTION

Why did our Lord not manifest His divine glory on Tabor before all the disciples instead of before three of them? First, because He Himself gave the Law through the mouth of Moses: *At the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established* (Deuteronomy 19:15). Therefore, three witnesses are sufficient. These three witnesses represent three main virtues: Peter--Faith, for he was the first to confess his faith in Christ as the Son of God; James--Hope, for, with faith in the promise of Christ, he was the first who laid down his life for the Lord, being the first to be slain by the Jews; John--Love, for he reclined on the bosom of the Lord, and remained beneath the Cross of the Lord until the end. God is called not the God of many, but rather the God of the chosen. *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob* (Exodus 3:6). God often valued a faithful man more than an entire nation. Thus, on many occasions, He wanted to destroy the entire Jewish nation, but because of the prayers of righteous Moses, He spared that nation so that it could live. God listened more to the faithful Prophet Elias than to the entire unbelieving kingdom of Ahab. Because of the prayers of one man, God saved towns and people. Thus, the sinful town of Ustiug would have been destroyed by fire and hail, had it not been saved by the prayers of the one and only righteous man in it, St. Procopius, the Fool-for-Christ (July 8).

### CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate the providence of God, which rewarded the virtue of Ruth and Boaz (The Book of Ruth):

1. How Ruth, being left a widow, remained faithful to Naomi, her aged mother-in-law, and how by her labors she fed both Naomi and herself;
2. How the wealthy Boaz was merciful, and helped these two poor women;
3. How Boaz and Ruth entered into marriage, from whom was born Obed, the father of Jesse, who was the father of David.

## HOMILY

### About the exaltation of the Church of God

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it" (Isaiah 2:2).

This prophecy pertains to the Church of Christ. Although this prophecy must have seemed mysterious to the Jews before Christ, it is completely clear for us today. The mountain, or heights, of the house of the Lord is truly established *in the top of the mountains*--in the heights of the heavens--for the Church of Christ is primarily sustained not by the earth, but rather by the heavens; and one part of the membership of the Church (and by now, a greater part) is to be found in heaven, while the other part is still on earth.

Further, the Church of Christ is *exalted above the hills*--above all earthly and human greatness. Human philosophy and art, and all the cultures of people, as well as all earthly values, represent only the low hills in comparison to the infinite heights of Christ's Church. For it was not difficult for the Church to create all of those hills; while not one of them, nor all of them together, even in the course of many thousands of years, could create the Church.

Finally, the prophet says: *All nations shall flow into it*. Truly, up to now, into what have all the nations flowed, if not into the Church of Christ? The Temple of Jerusalem was inaccessible to the Gentiles under the penalty of death. However, the Church has called all nations on earth unto itself from the very beginning--obedient to the command of the Lord: *Go ye therefore and teach all nations* (Matthew 28:19).

This is the vision of Isaiah, the son of Amos--a vision from afar, a vision truthful and wonderful.

O Wonderful Lord, we give You unceasing thanks that You have made us worthy to be the children of Your Holy and True Church, that is exalted above all the worldly heights.

**To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.**

## Services this Week

❖ **Friday - 08.19.2022. Holy Transfiguration of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ**

❖ **9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost-- August 21<sup>th</sup> -- 09:00 AM Divine Liturgy**

**Donations August 7, 2022**

Offering - \$1,102.00                      Candles - \$101.00

**Building Fund**

In Memory of Peter Martinovich from Irene Martinovich - \$50

In Memory of Pete Martinovich from Kathy & Ed Urban - \$50

**Large Candles**

In Memory of Connie Bartis from the Bartis Family

In Memory of Connie Bartis from Frank Palmer

In Memory of Connie Bartis from Kathy & Gerry Szmyd

In Memory of Nick & Sarah Davich from Carol McAllister

In Memory of Nicholas Davich Jr. from Carol McAllister

In Memory of Dudukovich & Knezevich Families from Mark Stokrp

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JOIN US FOR



Thanks to all of you who helped in any way to make our  
"Taste of Serbia" a success! Mnogaja ljeta!

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Friday September 16<sup>th</sup> 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM

Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup> Noon to 9:30 PM