

**Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church**  
*971 St. Clair Rd, Johnstown, PA 15905*  
Rev. Presbyterian Dragan Vukovic  
**(814) 244-4063**

**The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost**  
**(08.18.2024.)**

**Matthew 14:14-22**

And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick. And when it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat. And they say unto Him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. He said, Bring them hither to Me. And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children. 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. **(KJV)**

God's Holy Church is safe and secure for believers seeking the salvation of their souls. Believers are blessed to hear the Gospel and receive the Precious Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Church has sufficient nourishment for the hearts, minds and souls of all entering. Jesus demonstrated in the current Gospel His ability to feed the multitudes. Jesus always is sufficient for the hungry of heart, mind and soul.

Believers seeking peace of mind do well to enter God's Holy Church with anticipation. Readiness in the heart, mind and soul makes a difference in welcoming the Lord God into daily life.

Daily life structured in the Lord God enables the believer to travel the narrow path to God's Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life. Life centered in the Lord God strives to avoid sin.

Believers rooting their lives in the Lord quickly repent when they fall into sin. Repentance restores unity with the Lord. God is ever-present to welcome the repentant believer. (Mt.9:13)

The Gospel is proclaimed at each Divine Liturgy to nourish, strengthen and guide believers. Believers attentive to the Gospel strive to incorporate the message into daily life.

The Church is a place for learning the Christian way of life. Learning in Christ is an expectation throughout earthly life. Growing in Christ is possible and unlimited for believers desiring to grow.

Stagnancy has no place in the Christian life. Jesus is ever-present to facilitate the believer's growth. Jesus is within reach of each believer reaching out in prayer. Growth in Christ is limited by the commitment of the believer.

Strong faith in Christ leads to unlimited growth. Adhering to Christ's teachings opens possibilities in life for joyful growth. The life filled with the Spirit of God brings joy to the heart, mind and soul.

Worshipping in God's Holy Church facilitates transforming the believer. Being attentive to the Gospel changes the believer's life. The believer unites with Christ when partaking of the Precious Body and Blood of Christ.

Jesus was not deterred when the five thousand needed fed. Jesus is not deterred when people from around the world enter the Church seeking nourishment. Jesus feeds the hungry of soul every day.

Jesus deserves to be viewed with awe. Jesus merits worship and glory. Jesus personifies love. The five thousand fed in the current Gospel witnessed first-hand Jesus' Divine powers.

Readers of the Gospel uncover Jesus' powers throughout life. The Christian life is a life of discovery and adventure. God continues to be revealed for those with eyes to see.

Each day opens views of the miracles of the Lord God. Each day God is present for believers to experience Divine Love. The sun rises each day providing evidence of God's love.

The Church reaches across the globe to feed the hungry of soul. Today's world enables communications about the Lord to occur instantaneously. Believers are blessed to hear the Gospel in distant locations.

Present believers are challenged to witness about God's miracles. Each person is a recipient of God's love. Each person owes gratitude to God. Confessing belief in the Lord God is a way to show gratitude.

The way a person lives reveals the depth of personal faith. Daily actions verify the certainty of faith within the heart, mind and soul. God welcomes expressions of gratitude.(Luke 17:12-17)

Believers coming to God's Holy Church seeking salvation of the soul experience joy in the heart, mind and soul. Salvation equates with joy in the Living, Loving God.

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**The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Martyr Esignius. Forefeast of the Transfiguration. August 5/18, 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.**

**Father Rodney Torbic**

# The Prologue from Ochrid

## Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic

### 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

- **Monday (08.19.2024.)**
  - **Transfiguration of our Lord ( Bring grapes and fruit for blessing)**
  - *Divine Liturgy starts at 09:30 AM*
- **9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (08.25.2024.)**
  - **Holy Martyr Anicletus and Photius and others with them**
  - *Divine Liturgy starts at 09:30 AM*

## Donations August 11, 2024

**Offering - \$1,159.00   Candles - \$90.00**  
**Dues - \$50.00**

### Large Candles

(5) For Health of Olga Lucas from Sharon & Jim Urban  
IMO Cecilia Gresh Shuman from Olga Bulich

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**Thanks for another successful “Taste of Serbia”!!**  
**It takes a village...and we have the BEST!**  
**(Open your 2025 calendar and add Saturday, August 9, 2025)**

## UPCOMING EVENTS



**Johnstown Slavic Festival – September 20-21<sup>st</sup>**

**KOLO SLAVA CELEBRATION – Sunday, September 29th**

**FISH FRY – Friday, October 4th**

**BASKET PARTY**  
**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2024**  
**DETAILS COMING SOON**

**St. Petka Slava Celebration – Sunday, October 27th**