



# OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH

A MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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REV. THOMAS P. STEINMETZ, Pastor

RT. REV. ANDRE ST. GERMAIN (retired)

REV. ROGER BOUCHER - Weekend Ministry

REV. THEOPHAN LEONARCZYK, Eparchial Chancellor

*"Enter the Church and repent ... for here is the physician, not the judge. Here one is not investigated, one receives remission of sins." (St. John Chrysostom)*

August 7, 2016

*The Second Day of the Feast of the Transfiguration*

*The Commemoration of the Hosiomartyr Dometios*

## THE 12<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Parish Advisory & Finance Council:

KEN MONTY (PRESIDENT), RICHARD ASHOOH, ROBERT ANDERSON, ROBIN ANDERSON, MARY CULLEN, MARTHA DAGHER, MARYLOU LAZOS, TERRI LEONARCZYK, MATTHEW LOMANNO, PAUL MANSUR, NAJWA MOUSSOBA, PAUL ST. GERMAIN, AND CHRISTELLE SLAYBE

Parish Secretary: ROBIN ANDERSON

Cedars Society President: MARYLOU LAZOS

Sunday School Coordinator: MARTHA DAGHER

N.A.M.Y. Advisor: ROBIN ANDERSON

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION: Before or after any service, or by appointment;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN ILLUMINATION: Please contact the clergy in advance to arrange for the required baptismal instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING: At least six months prior to the proposed wedding, please contact the clergy to arrange for the required interview and instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Please contact the pastor at any time when this sacrament is needed;

HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK: Anyone too infirm to attend our services may receive Communion in the home. Please advise the clergy whenever this sacrament is needed.

## THE ORDER OF TODAY'S LITURGY

### The Troparion of the Resurrection (3<sup>rd</sup> Tone:) Page 52

#### The Troparion of the Transfiguration (7<sup>th</sup> Tone:

You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God, showing Your disciples as much of Your glory as they could hold. Let your eternal light shine also upon us sinners, through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Giver of Light, glory to You!

#### The Troparion of the Dormition of the Theotokos (1<sup>st</sup> Tone): Page 16

#### Kondakion of the Transfiguration (7<sup>th</sup> Tone):

On the mountain You were transfigured, O Christ our God, and Your disciples saw as much of Your glory as they could hold, so that when they should see You crucified, they would know that You suffer willingly, and would proclaim to the world that You are verily the Splendor of the Father.

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#### THE PROKIMENON:

**SING PRAISE TO OUR GOD, SING PRAISE!**

**SING PRAISE TO OUR KING, SING PRAISE!**

*All you peoples, clap your hands! Shout to God with cries of gladness!*

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**Today's Readings: 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11 and Matthew 19: 16-26**

## LITURGY INTENTIONS

#### Saturday 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Peter Freije (3<sup>rd</sup>), David Gula (54<sup>th</sup>), and Steven George (2<sup>nd</sup>)

#### Sunday, 10:00 AM:

For the repose of Nassim Sleiman, by the Moussoba Family

For the repose of Daniel Komisarek, (8<sup>th</sup> Anniversary),  
by the Komisarek Family

#### Next Saturday (Aug. 13), 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Wady George (43<sup>rd</sup>), Wilfred LeBlanc (41<sup>st</sup>),  
Rachel George (46<sup>th</sup>), and Paul Nassoura (30<sup>th</sup>)

#### Next Sunday (Aug. 14), 10:00 AM:

For the repose of Margaret Mitchell, the mother of Fr. Eugene Mitchell,  
who departed from this life on August 5



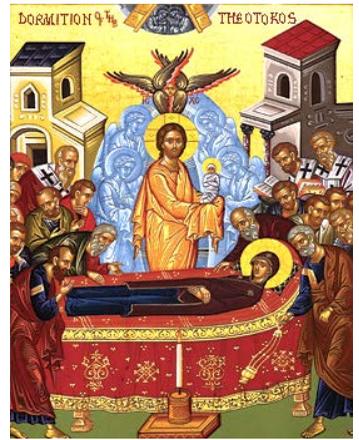
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***Helpers are needed*** on Friday August 12, and Saturday, August 13, 9 AM to 1 PM to clean the church in preparation for guests who will visit our church during Mahrajan. See Jeanine Notter if you can help.

## August 1 to 14: the Fast of the Dormition

The Feast of the Dormition is preceded by a two-week fast, referred to as the Fast of the Dormition. From August 1 to August 14 (inclusive) Eastern Christians fast from red meat, poultry, meat products, dairy products (eggs and milk products), fish, oil, and wine. The Dormition Fast is a stricter fast than either the Nativity Fast (Advent) or the Apostles' Fast, with only wine and oil (but no fish) allowed on weekends. As with the other Fasts of the Church year, there is a Great Feast that falls during the Fast: The Transfiguration (August 6), on which fish, wine and oil are allowed.

Fasting, of course, is not holiness itself, but a tool to use on the path to holiness. How else might we supplement our work of fasting? Try spending ten minutes with the Lord in prayer every day. Call on the Holy Spirit to empower you to live a renewed life in Christ. Read a little from the Bible each day. Make an effort to extend love and forgiveness to someone. Let us resolve as a parish to seek God together during these coming days, and to ask His blessing upon our community.



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## MAHRAJAN 2016 is coming August 19, 20, 21!

### *Here is how you can help:*

- Sign-up sheets are available downstairs for volunteers to sign up for working the Mahrajan. Please sign up for specific times and locations where you are willing to help.
- Posters are available to advertise our event. Please take a few from the back of the church and help post them
- Consider making a cash donation so that we can buy foodstuffs that we need for this event. There are sign-up sheets for this in the church hall.
- Please purchase the raffle tickets if you have received them in the mail. If you did not receive them and would like some, see Fr. Tom.
- Remember to invite your friends, neighbors, and family to the Mahrajan!

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**Attendance - Last Saturday 4:30 PM: 24 Sunday 11:00 AM: 85**

**Last Weekend's Collection: \$1,048.<sup>00</sup>**

*The average Sunday envelope donation: \$32.<sup>48</sup>*

*The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$ 83,551.<sup>34</sup>*

### SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Wed., August 10	7:00 PM	<b>Paraclisis</b>
Fri., August 12	7:00 PM	<b>Paraclisis</b>
Sat., August 13	4:30 PM	<b>Divine Liturgy: The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost</b>
Sun., August 14	9:15 AM	<b>Sunday Orthros</b>
Sun., August 14	10:00 AM	<b>Divine Liturgy: The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost</b>
Mon., August 15	7:00 PM	<b>Divine Liturgy: The Feast of the Dormition</b>

# An Explanation of the Icon of the Transfiguration

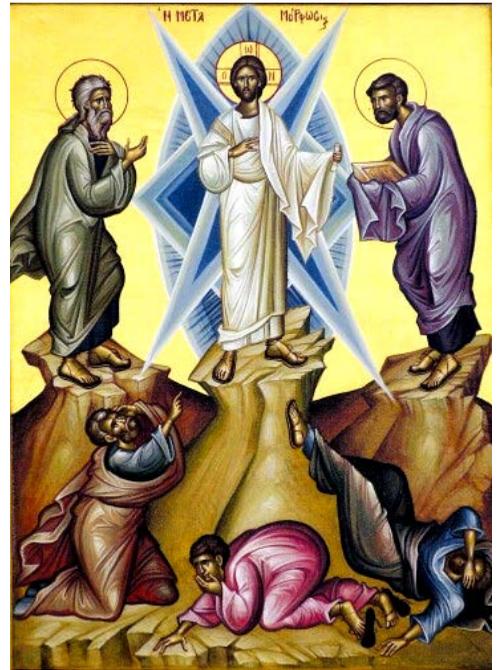
In the icon of the Feast of the Transfiguration, Christ is the central figure, appearing in a dominant position within a circular mandorla. He is clearly at the visual and theological center of the icon. His right hand is raised in blessing, and his left hand contains a scroll. The mandorla with its brilliant colors of white, gold, and blue represent the divine glory and light. The halo around the head of Christ is inscribed with the Greek words Ο ΩΝ, meaning "The One Who is".

Elijah and Moses stand at the top of separate mountain peaks to the left and right of Christ. They are bowing toward Christ with their right hands raised in a gesture of intercession towards Him. Saint John Chrysostom explains the presence of these two fathers of the faith from the Old Testament in three ways. He states that they represent the Law and the Prophets (Moses received the Law from God, and Elijah was a great prophet); they both experienced visions of God (Moses on Mount Sinai and Elijah on Mount Carmel); and they represent the living and the dead (Elijah, the living, because he was taken up into heaven by a chariot of fire, and Moses, the dead, because he did experience death).

Below Christ are the three Apostles, who by their posture in the icon show their response to the transfiguration of Christ. James has fallen over backwards with his hands over his eyes. John in the center has fallen prostrate. Peter is kneeling and raises his right hand toward Christ in a gesture expressing his desire to build the three booths. The garments of the Apostles are in a state of disarray as to indicate the dramatic impact the vision has had on them.

The icon of the feast directs our attention toward the event of the Transfiguration and specifically to the glory of God as revealed in Christ. This event came at a critical point in the ministry of our Lord, just as He was setting out on His journey to Jerusalem. He would soon experience the humiliation, suffering, and death of the Cross. However, the glorious light of the Resurrection was revealed to strengthen His disciples for the trials that they would soon experience.

The feast also points to the great and glorious Second Coming of our Lord and the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God when all of creation will be transfigured and filled with light.



## Vocation View

Paul is aware of the fact that he is in the line of those who ministered before him, and that he is handing on what came from God for His people. In the Gospel, Jesus calls upon someone to follow and serve in this manner – but the young man, unlike Paul, is not able to give his life to that vocation. Have we encouraged and supported those whom the Lord may be calling to the priesthood in our midst by our prayers and support?

# The Feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos

The circumstances of the Dormition of the Mother of God were known in the Church from apostolic times. Already in the first century, the Hieromartyr Dionysius the Areopagite wrote about Her "Falling-Asleep." In the second century, the account of the bodily ascent of the Most Holy Virgin Mary to Heaven is found in the works of Meliton, Bishop of Sardis. In the fourth century, St Epiphanius of Cyprus refers to the tradition about the "Falling Asleep" of the Mother of God. In the fifth century, St Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem, told the holy Byzantine Empress Pulcheria: "Although there is no account of the circumstances of Her death in Holy Scripture, we know about them from the most ancient and credible Tradition."



According to these traditions Mary was living in Jerusalem when God revealed to her that she was about to die. She desired to see the Twelve Apostles for a final time before she died, and each of them was miraculously transported to her deathbed. As Mary passed to the Lord, they observed Christ come down from heaven and receive the soul of His mother into His arms. Three days later the Apostles went to the tomb of the Mother of God. The air was filled with a fragrant smell and with the sounds of an angelic concert, and the tomb was empty. Mary herself then appeared to the Twelve and confirmed to them that she had been taken into heaven.

**The Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Dormition will be celebrated on Monday evening, August 15, at 7:00 PM.**



# MAHRAJAN

MIDDLE EASTERN  FOOD FESTIVAL

# AUGUST 19-21

# Shining Like the Sun

TOWARDS THE END of Jesus' public ministry He began preparing His disciples for His approaching death and resurrection. In *Mt 16* this scene concludes with the following prophecy: "*Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom*" (v. 28). This is immediately followed by a fulfillment of this prophecy: the holy transfiguration of Christ. As St Gregory Palamas says in his homily on this feast, "It is the light of His own forthcoming transfiguration which He terms the Glory of His Father and of His Kingdom."

St Gregory Palamas describes it this way: "Christ was transfigured, not by the addition of something He was not, nor by a transformation into something He was not, but by the manifestation to His disciples of what He really was. He opened their eyes so that instead of being blind they could see. While He Himself remained the same, they could now see Him as other than He had appeared to them formerly. For He is '*the true light*' (*Jn 1:9*), the beauty of divine glory, and He shone forth like the sun."

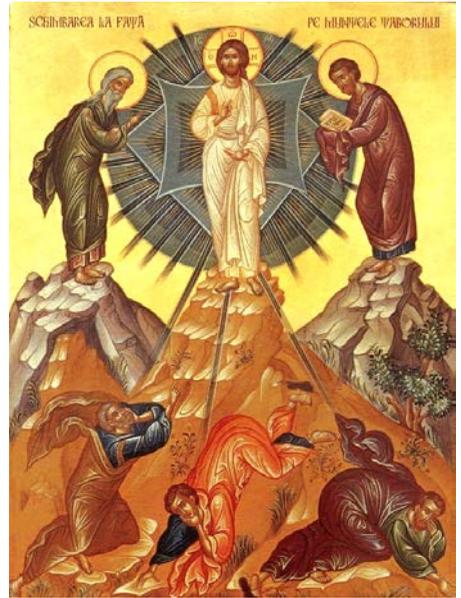
As St Ephrem the Syrian expressed it, "They saw two suns; one in the sky, as usual, and one unusually; one visible in the firmament and lighting the world, and one, His face, visible to them alone" (*Sermon on the Transfiguration*, 8). In one sense we can say that Christ was not transfigured; it was the Apostles' ability to see Him which was transfigured.

## “What He Really Was”

For a moment Christ was revealed to the disciples as what He really was: God incarnate in our human flesh. "We believe that at the transfiguration He manifested not some other sort of light, but only that which was concealed beneath His fleshly exterior. This Light was the Light of the Divine Nature, and as such, it was Uncreated and Divine" (St Gregory Palamas).

This Light was manifested to the disciples in the radiance of His face and garments: "*His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light*" (*Mt 17:2*). As Mark describes it, "*His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them*" (*Mk 9:3*). The immaterial divine nature of the Son of God is manifested in the physical sign of a shining face and garments because this was all that the Disciples could absorb. As we sing in the troparion of this feast, Christ was "showing Your disciples as much of Your glory as they could behold."

Over succeeding centuries, the Church deepened its understanding of the Incarnation, but not without disagreement. It took several hundred years and several Ecumenical Councils for the Church to articulate its faith in Christ as the incarnate Word of God. By the fourth century the Church was calling Christ "Light from Light, true God from true God... of one essence with the Father" but it took several more centuries and councils to grasp the implications of that statement.



As iconography developed it settled on one particular form to represent the divine nature of the light perceived by the Disciples. The *mandorla* is a design made up of overlapping geometrical shapes which surrounds the image of Christ in icons of the transfiguration. The basic mandorla – an Italian word meaning *almond* – contains three round or oval concentric circles, in shades of blue or gold, representing the Trinity. The innermost circle is of the deepest shade representing the unseen Father. Other geometrical shapes represent the energy of the divine light shining upon the Disciples. The mandorla is generally used in icons representing the glorified Christ at His transfiguration and resurrection and when receiving His Mother at her dormition.

### **What We Are Meant to Become**

In the mystery of Christ’s transfiguration the Church has caught a glimpse of what those who are in Christ are meant to be: persons who in their humanity can have God dwelling in them, reflecting that presence as light. The Lord Himself tells us that at His second coming “*the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*” (Mt 1:43). The custom of depicting saints and angels with haloes derives from this prophetic statement of Christ.

Becoming “righteous” is our task in this life, in preparation for the glory to come. In both the Old and New Testaments we are frequently instructed how we may become righteous. In the New Testament, however, these instructions are phrased in terms of God dwelling in us. “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” (Col 1:27) is the One whose presence within us guarantees our righteousness before God. This is the “*mystery hidden from eternity*” (Col 1:26), which the Greek Fathers called *theosis*, the process of our transformation by the presence of God within us.

This process of *theosis* begins with our baptism. As we sing so often in our services, “*As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*” (Gal 3:27). God dwells within us but requires that we “put on Christ” by the way we live. “*We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*” (Rom 6:4). Our cooperation with God dwelling in us to transform us is called *synergy* by the Fathers: the life-long task of consciously becoming God-like in our thoughts, words and actions in order to radiate the presence of God within us by Baptism.

Despite all our best efforts, none of us – not even the saints – can so unwaveringly combat our passions that we realize our potential on our own. And so Christ has given us an outward sign of His love in the mystery of the Eucharist to which we can return again and again. Through the holy mysteries and our striving to live like Christ we can attain a likeness to God and **union with Him so far as possible**. We who are not holy by nature can become holy, and become partakers of glory.

### **Looking to the Last Day**

In the Second Epistle of St Peter we read his eye-witness account of the transfiguration (2 Pt 1:16-18). This is what follows: “*And so we have this sure prophetic word, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts*” (v.19). The Transfiguration is thus a prophetic anticipation of Christ’s glorious second coming when the “morning star” (Christ) will fill us with His light.

The Transfiguration, then, symbolizes the life to come and thus the goal of every Christian pursuit. As St Gregory the Theologian expressed it in his Third Oration *On the Son*, the holy transfiguration of Christ initiates us “into the mystery of the future”.

**Please remember** to pray for the health and protection of Genevieve Allen, Olivia Aragon, Elizabeth Ashooh, Elsie Ashooh, Al Auclair, Alice Auclair, Erin Baroody, Michael Baroody, Anthony Blando, Helena Burkush, Fr. Michael Carl, Danielle Caron, Michael Cavanaugh, Meghan Connors, Sarah Cullen, Theresa Cullen, Jamileh Dagher, Sher Farrow, Declan Finn, Janet Drake, Julie Fregeau, Mary Fregeau, Peter Fregeau, Christine Freitas, John Gallagher, Loretto Gauvin, Bonnie Gomez, Gail Fisher, Nick Haddad, Jean Hannoush, Lucille Harper, Laura Jorba, Virginia Kearney, Shirley Lanoue, Susan Latvis, Roger Lawrence, Diana Lebel, Peggy Leclar, Sadie Grace McCallum, Miriam McCallum, Susan Merrill, Alfred Nasr, Afef Nasr, Blaise Notter, Steven O'Leary, Denis O'Keefe, Ellen Osgood, Josephine Paquette, Sheila Quinn, Deborah Roberts, Adam Rubin, Fr. Andre St. Germain, Deniese Sherburne, Salwa Sleiman, Tarrant Smith, Mary Stephen, Catherine Waldron, Laura Weingast, and Iris Angelina Velasquez.

**If you are visiting our church,** our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Please give us the chance to get to know you by joining us for some coffee, pastry, and conversation in the church hall following the Divine Liturgy. If you would like to know more about the Melkite Catholic Church, check out the brochure entitled *“Welcome to this Holy House,”* located on the table in the back of the church.





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