

The Transfiguration of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ

The Feast of the Transfiguration takes its origins from the Gospel event. Jesus led his disciples up the mountain. "He was transfigured before their eyes. His face became dazzling as the sun, His clothes as radiant as light" (Mt 17:2). In this light we see Christ. "This is my beloved Son, on whom my favor rests. Listen to him" (Mt 17:5).

The icon portrays Christ surrounded by the glorious light of his divinity and clothed in the same garments in which he is depicted in all representations of the resurrection. To his left is Moses, holding the Tablets of the Law, while to his right is the Prophet Elias.

St. John Chrysostom offers various reasons for the appearance of these particular Old Testament figures at the Transfiguration. They represent the law and the prophets. Both had visions of God. Moses represents the dead while Elias, having been carried up to heaven in a chariot of fire, represents the living over whom - both the living and the dead - Christ reigns in glory.

The Apostles Peter, James and John are in the lower portion of the icon. These are the same three who would appear in Gethsemane with Christ; they were being prepared for the Passion, which they still were not able to comprehend. St. Peter kneels supported on his right hand, raising his left hand to shield his eyes from the light. St. John, always is depicted in the center, turning his back to the light. St. James flees from the light.

Christ appeared to the Apostles not in the form of man as the "suffering servant" but, rather, in the form of God. "For taking apart the three disciples he has expressly chosen he led them up into the mountain by themselves; and for a short time he concealed the flesh he had assumed, and was transfigured before them" (Vesper Hymn).

The feast of the Transfiguration celebrates the divinity of Christ and the divinization of man. It gives us a glimpse into Christ's divine person, and sets us afire with divine light.

TROPARION

You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ God, revealing as much of your glory to your disciples as they could behold. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, let your everlasting light shine also upon us sinners. O Giver of Light, glory to you!