



Orthodox Church of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

306 W. Main Street Emmitsburg,
MD 21727

<http://EntranceMission.org>

717-817-0084

The V. Rev. Elias Yelovich,
Rector

The Rev. Anthony Duvall,
Assistant

Transfiguration: The Feast of Transformation August 19, 2024

Christ is Transfigured! In Glory!

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Several years ago, shortly after we had moved into this part of the world, a friend came to dinner. He traveled from one of the highways through the mountains and hills of our little segment of Adams County. And when he arrived, he said to me that he was lucky to be alive! The scenery along the road, he said, was so breathtaking, beautiful green hills, stunning flowers and trees just about to burst into blossom, that he nearly lost control of the car and ran off the road.

In truth, we live in one of the most magnificent places on earth. This part of the world, the western edge of MD and Adams County in PA are noted for having a perfect climate for growing apples, other fruits and wonderful garden crops. It all begins with a seed or seedling. Once planted, the climate takes over. The right amount of rain, sun, and gentle showers creates the conditions where our little corner of the world produces more apples per square mile than anywhere else in the world, other than a few areas in Washington State out west.

The spiritual life begins with a seed, a seed planted within our hearts when we are baptized. Fed, watered and prepared by the Holy Spirit in Chrismation and then over and over again in the Holy Eucharist, the spiritual life can develop and thrive. What God gives us in Baptism requires regular care and support. That is the reason we come together in our little church week after week. Orthodox Christianity is not a faith dependent upon lectures, teachings and learning. It's odd perhaps to hear me say that, but it is true. Our faith is about the giving and receiving of Divine Grace, the self-giving of God, first planted in us in Holy Baptism, nurtured by the Holy Spirit Himself in the Sacrament of Chrismation and shared again and again in the Holy Eucharist. Forgiveness, charity, love, reconciliation, growth and transformation are all gifts and goals for each and every one of us.

Today we heard about the miracle of transformation in that stunning event in the life of our Lord that we call the Transfiguration. Peter, James, and John ascend the mountain with Christ and see Him as He is in His Divinity. They are permitted to see him behind the cloak of His humanity and share a vision with Him – the great leader Moses and the great prophet Elias are there, speaking with the Lord. The experience must have been ecstatic, for Peter wants to prolong it. Who could blame him!

This revelation, this theophany, of course is about Jesus and Who He Is. But more – it is also about who and what each of us will be as we are transformed by the Grace of the Holy Spirit. This transformation will take place over eternity as we grow and become more and more like Him. It can only happen through God's own self-giving – His own Grace, bestowed repeatedly as gift to each of us. We must cooperate, of course, and by taking baby steps toward the light of Grace, by relying on Him, by our prayer and our dependance on Him – we too will change. We too will be transformed. For that, you see, is the destiny of each of us!

As you wander through this incredibly lush and beautiful part of the world remember that it all began with a seed or a seedling. The conditions of our part of the world all work together to produce the beauty that you see. In the same way, Holy Baptism bestows a seed within us that God nurtures through the Holy Spirit. This is why we need the Church and why the spiritual fathers tell us that there is no salvation apart from her. The transformation we heard about today is the goal that each of us will also experience by Grace. That future is present now, but only in the Church of Jesus Christ!

Christ is transfigured! On Mt. Tabor!

Orthodox Church of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple
306 West Main Street
Emmitsburg, MD 21727
<https://EntranceMission.org>