

THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION - AUGUST 6

All three of the Synoptic Gospels record the event of the Lord's Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, Luke 9:28-36). Just prior to the Transfiguration, all three Gospels also record Jesus' trip with His disciples to Caesarea Philippi, located about thirty miles north of the Sea of Galilee. Caesarea Philippi was a primarily pagan Greek town occupied by the Romans. The Greek god Pan was worshiped there in a cave thought to be bottomless and often referred to as the gate to the netherworld because of its association with the pagan god. It was there that Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was. Peter declared, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus then blessed Peter and announced His intent to build His Church upon Peter, declaring that "the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it..." (Matthew 16:16-18).



THE TRANSFIGURATION. *The Maronite Icons: Modern Sacred Art.* Dar Sader Publishers: Beirut 1999.
Via Maronite Heritage.com/icons

After this significant exchange, Jesus began revealing to His disciples His impending fate—His journey to Jerusalem to suffer and die. Peter resisted this revelation, to which Jesus responded sternly, correcting Peter's human thinking with divine wisdom (Matthew 16:22-23).

This is the context of the Feast of the Transfiguration we celebrate today. First, Jesus proclaimed the triumph of His Church over evil. Second, He informed them that this victory would be achieved through His own suffering and death. Although the first message is encouraging, the second one is challenging to accept. According to the Gospels, Jesus allowed His disciples about a week to grapple with these teachings, a period that must have been tough for them.

Understanding their struggle, Jesus took His three closest companions, Peter, James, and John, up a high mountain. There He was transfigured before them, radiating pure white light, conversing with Moses and Elijah, and being affirmed in His identity by the Father.

This event was likely meant to reinforce His disciples' faith after a week of pondering Jesus' foretold suffering and death, along with His exhortation that they must follow Him. The Transfiguration affirmed Jesus' divinity and His relationship with the revered figures of Moses and Elijah. Furthermore, the Father in Heaven confirmed Jesus as His divine Son with whom He was well pleased.

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MARONITE DIVINE LITURGY

SUNDAY, 9:15 A.M.

St. Agnes Chapel
7775 Vanderbilt Beach Road
Naples, Florida

WEDNESDAY, 12:00 NOON

Saint Peter the Apostle Catholic Church
5130 Rattlesnake Hammock Road
Naples, Florida

AUGUST 3 2025 THE NINTH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

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THE LITURGY THIS WEEK IS OFFERED

For the intentions of
the Maronite Order BVM

SUNDAY'S NUMBERS

7/20 Attendance: 49
Collection: \$626

7/27 Attendance: 36
Collection: \$460

*When you are out of town, you can still
donate to the collection by using this link.*
<https://naplesmaronite.org/donate>

We are grateful for all your generous financial
support. The bank has requested that all
checks must be made out to
Heart of Jesus Naples Maronite Mission

EPISTLE

2 CORINTHIANS 5:20-6:10

So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. Working together, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says: "In an acceptable time I helped you, and on the day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We cause no one to stumble in anything, in order that no fault may be found with our ministry; on the contrary, in everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God, through much endurance, in afflictions, hardships, constraints, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, vigils, fasts; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, in a holy spirit, in unfeigned love, in truthful speech, in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness at the right and at the left; through glory and dishonor, insult and praise. We are treated as deceivers and yet are truthful; as unrecognized and yet acknowledged; as dying and behold we live; as chastised and yet not put to death; as sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.

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After the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, these three Apostles shared their experience of the Transfiguration, fortifying others in the faith. This story is still shared today to strengthen us as we bear our own crosses.

The Feast of the Transfiguration is strategically placed forty days before the Feast of the Triumph of the Cross. Thus, the Transfiguration should be seen as a preparation for both the Cross of Christ and our participation in that triumph. According to the Gospel, we are called to take up our crosses and follow Jesus for the glory of the Father, the fulfillment of His will, and the good of the Church, which will always prevail against the gates of hell.

As you celebrate the Transfiguration today, look at this event as a foretaste of the reward awaiting you, and a source of encouragement to endure all sufferings for the final victory of Christ. The Christian life, as stated by Jesus Himself, is about suffering and dying out of love and with unwavering hope. By uniting our trials with Christ's Cross, we share in His glorious victory for all eternity.

GOSPEL

LUKE 4:14-21



Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all. He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."



JESUS READING IN THE SYNAGOGUE. Fresco from the Serbian Orthodox Monastery Visoki Decani
via Wikimedia Commons

News from Bishop Gregory

In the coming 2026 Lebanese election, Lebanese citizens living abroad will only be allowed to vote for 6 parliamentary seats instead of the full 128 parliamentary seats like those living in Lebanon. This limits the rights of the Lebanese Diaspora to share in Lebanon's future, and the law must be changed so that those living abroad have the same rights as those in Lebanon. His Eminence and Beatitude Bechara Cardinal Peter Rai has also spoken in favor of the Lebanese Diaspora.

To make our voices heard, a petition has been launched to repeal Article 112 from the Lebanese Electoral. More information is available on our Naples Mission social media sites, or at
www.stmaron.org/press-releases/cir-25-84-equal-voting-rights-for-all-lebanese