

Rector's Letter,

August, 2021

Dear brothers and sisters:

What does it mean to be a Christian? Most basically, a Christian is a follower of Jesus Christ: someone who believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who has lived and died in the flesh and has risen, offering us new life.

But a lot of the time, we can live with some murkier definition: it's "how we were raised," what our parents were before us, one way of expressing our proud heritage, or even a way of making clear we are not Jewish or Muslim or atheist. We can spend a considerable portion of our life not really understanding what it means to follow Christ or to learn from him.

So the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, celebrated on August 6, can seem rather strange and removed from our daily existence. Three of his disciples follow Jesus up a mountain, where he is revealed to them in dazzling white, with the prophets Moses and Elijah beside him. And a voice from heaven declares: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" What are we supposed to hear and see?

First of all, we can see fellow disciples who follow their Master where he tells them to go. This is the most fundamental meaning of "Hear him!" We are not being true disciples, nor true Christians, if we do not make a constant, sincere effort to learn and follow what our Master Jesus Christ commands us to do.

We need to follow him into his Church, to hear his word. We need to think and pray throughout the week

about what we heard on Sunday. And we need to put those words into action: love God and your neighbor; forgive as God has forgiven you; make peace; be generous; show mercy to those in need. These are not abstract or scholarly matters—they are commandments made to all of us. Even young children can grasp them.



If we do make the daily effort to "hear him" we will slowly but surely be transformed, to be more like Jesus Christ. The wise St. Maximus the Confessor explains that it was not that the Lord changed at the Transfiguration but that the disciples' eyes were opened to see the Lord clearly as he truly is. In following his commandments, they were granted wisdom and understanding to see the Lord "hidden in plain sight."

We are promised that on the Last Day all of us will see the Lord coming in glory. For those who have been listening to his voice, who have prepared to meet him, the sight will be full of joy and gladness.

We need to adjust our eyes to the coming divine glare by looking for signs of Jesus Christ among the humble and meek; we need to use the "hearing aids" Christ has given us: the Scriptures, the worship, our prayers, confession, and all the rest. "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" This is how we respond.

Yours in Christ,

F. John S. Mosher

Around the Parish

We grieve with the families of **James Veronick and Helen Kasprovich**, who both died at the end of June. May their memory be eternal!

Our services in the temple are streamed via Facebook and Youtube. You can most easily find them on our website:
<https://sspeterpaul.org/media> .

We are in need of more **volunteers to run our livestream of church services.** If you have the willingness to learn the necessary technology, please speak with Rick Comshaw or Fr. Joshua.

You can follow our parish on Facebook. We have shared a steady stream of news and other material on our page:
facebook.com/saintspeterandpaulmeriden/ .

As we are about two-thirds of the way through the year, **please review your pledge of support to the parish.** If you have questions, speak with Alexia Tassmer (203-284-0856). Thank you for your ongoing support of the ministry of this parish.

Donations are also welcome online! We are able to direct your contributions to our general treasury, to fulfilling your pledge, or to special funds like the Charity, Endowment, and Scholarship Funds. Use the Donation button on the right side of our parish website, or use this link: https://sspeterpaul.org/news_201014_1

Dormition Fast: Aug. 1-14. The fast begins with the Procession of the Holy Cross and ends with the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, August 15. The remembrance of the Cross reminds us of our own

precious responsibility to follow the way of Jesus Christ, while the Dormition reminds us of our hoped-for end, welcomed into Paradise by Christ's own mother. Don't let these few days slip past unnoticed.

On Aug. 6, we celebrate the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ, when he took the disciples Peter, James and John to Mount Tabor and there manifested his divine glory to them, as far as they could bear it. The disciples saw Moses and Elijah standing with the Lord, and they heard the voice of the Father saying, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." By this sign, the disciples would come to understand that the Lord suffered and died voluntarily, for our sake. Traditionally, this feast is the occasion to bless grapes and "fruits of the harvest." You are welcome to bring fruits and vegetables for a blessing (which takes place at the end of the Liturgy).

The Dormition (Falling-Asleep) of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary on Aug. 15.

On the eve, Friday, Aug. 14, at 6 PM, we will celebrate with Vespers and Liturgy in the temple, followed by the blessing of flowers. The Dormition is a foretaste of the universal hope of life following death. In the feast's icon (which we can see on the ceiling of our church), we see the Theotokos laid out upon her funeral bier, but her Son bearing her up to heaven, as a new-born babe. We glorify her, and pray that, on the last day, all of us may be carried into new life!

