

GENERAL & SACRAMENTAL INFORMATION

Regarding the Temple: In our tradition, the church temple is a house of prayer. Upon entering it, please refrain from unnecessary conversation before, during and after church services, most especially during the Divine Liturgy. Prior to divine services, or during coffee hour in the Church Hall is the appropriate place to exchange personal greetings and converse with one another. May God bless your reverence and piety!

Sick/Emergency Calls/Institutional Visitations: are answered as requests are received. All visitations are by request. Call to schedule an appointment.

Confessions: Are heard one half-hour before every service at Holy Assumption, and once a month at Ss. Peter & Paul. Special arrangements are by necessity, and thereby, appointment only.

Sacraments of Illumination: In the case of infants, Baptism, Chrismation, & Eucharist are administered on ordinary Sundays of the church year, preferably in the context of Divine Liturgy. At least one sponsor must be of the Orthodox Faith and in good sacramental standing. The newly baptized must have one name that is Biblical or Christian in its origin.

What is Church Membership? By regulation, active membership in the church consists not merely in the payment of a set sum, or by fulfilling a *minimum* sacramental obligation, but rather in participation in the life of the church (commensurate with your physical ability). This includes entering into the spirit of the faith through regular and frequent attendance, participation in the divine mysteries, sustained financial support (at a percentage that reflects your ability), and adherence to the parish, diocesan, and national church statutes.

Receiving Communion: while all are welcome to pray with us, we politely offer a reminder that the Orthodox Church maintains a closed communion. All are welcome to Antidoron bread following the Divine Liturgy, but only prepared Orthodox Christians may receive the Eucharist. Orthodox Christians do not commune in non-Orthodox churches, and the non-Orthodox are not communed in an Orthodox Church. Thank you!

Lapsed Members: You are always welcome home, and we need you! Generally speaking, sincere Confession, Communion, and regular attendance are all that is required to begin parish life anew! See Fr. Elijah for specific details.

New Members/Adult Chrismation: new members are always welcome. In the case of interested adults seeking Chrismation, a period of catechesis prescribed by the pastor is necessary before the administration of Holy Mysteries. An Orthodox sponsor is required.

Weddings: A minimum six-month notice is requested. Either Bride or Bride-groom must be an Orthodox Christian, and a parishioner in good standing. Dispensations may be required for inter-faith marriages (the marriage of an Orthodox & any non-Orthodox person). Banns of matrimony published 3 weeks before ceremony. No Weddings performed during fasting seasons!!!

Burial in Church Cemetery: Burial in consecrated ground is reserved for the Orthodox and their spouses/children. Charity burials, or odd circumstances are at the rector's discretion. It is strongly encouraged to hold viewings and visitation of the reposed in the church.

Our Stewardship of the Church: "Lord Jesus Christ, Thou art the good steward, who redeemed Adam and Eve of their failed stewardship by offering Thyself for the life of the world. Thou didst teach us in the feeding of the multitudes that whatever we give to God is returned to us multiplied. Thou didst praise those good and faithful servants in the parable of the talents who returned to the Master their gifts. So help us to learn the joy of stewardship, remembering that everything we have comes from Thee and belongs to Thee. We know, Lord, that we often live in fear of the future and insecurity. Help us to remember the lilies of the field and so to trust in Thy providence. Grant to us a cheerful and generous spirit. Enkindle in the hearts of all Thy people a zealous love for Thee. For Thou art the Good Steward, and to Thee we give thanks, praise and glory, together with Thy Father who is from everlasting and Thine all holy good and life-giving Spirit now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen."

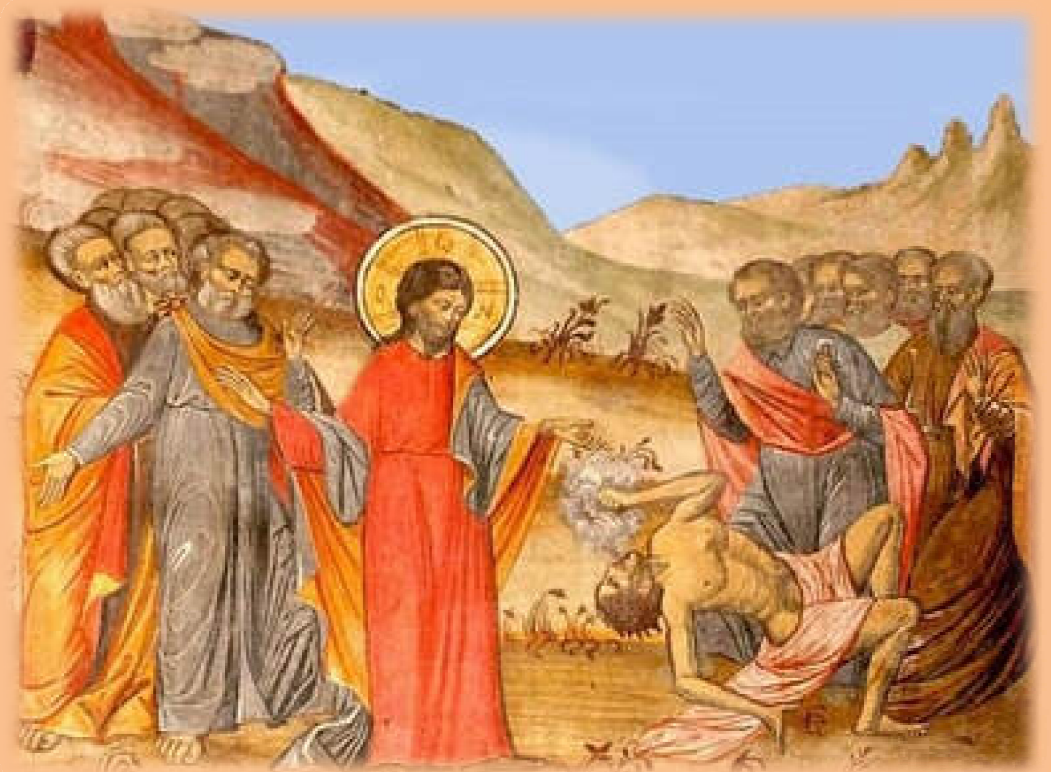
Prayer When Lighting A Candle: "Set our hearts on fire with love for Thee, O Christ our God, so that in this flame we may love Thee with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul and with all our strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, so that by keeping Thy commandments we may glorify Thee, the giver of all good gifts. Amen."

HOLY ASSUMPTION ORTHODOX CHURCH

629 Sunshine Avenue • Central City, Pa. 15926

SS. PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

Tipple Road • Goodtown, Pa. 15530



Very Rev. Archpriest Elijah J. Bremer, Rector

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**9th Sunday Post-Pentecost,
17 August 2025**

*"... for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain,
'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."*

(Matthew 17:20)

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE: 17 - 24 AUGUST 2025

Sunday 17 August Tone 1	10th Sunday Post-Pentecost <i>Epistle:</i> 1 Corinthians 4:9-16 <i>Gospel:</i> Matthew 17:14-23	8:40 am , Hours (CC) 9:00 am , Divine Liturgy (CC)
Tuesday 19 August	Transfiguration of the Lord (Major Holy Day)	9:00 am , Divine Liturgy (CC) <i>Blessing of First Fruits Today!</i>
Sunday 24 August Tone 2	11th Sunday Post-Pentecost <i>Epistle:</i> 1 Corinthians 9:2-12 <i>Gospel:</i> Matthew 18:23-35	8:40 am , Hours of Prayer (PH) 9:00 am , Divine Liturgy (PH)

~Important Considerations ~

All persons are present at their own risk. Please refrain from attending if you are currently sick, or if you were exposed to a contagious disease. Also understand that if you do not attend Church for more than three weeks without just cause, according to canon law you must go to confession prior to receiving Holy Communion.

YOU ARE INVITED

Holy Assumption and Ss. Peter & Paul Parishes invite all of our parishioners, their spouses and children, and our benefactors/friends to a combined feast day picnic on 31 August 2025, immediately following Sunday Divine Liturgy.

As part of our Liturgical celebration, we will process around the church with the Dormition Shroud, the Gospel Books, and the Icon of Ss. Peter & Paul. Members of each church will carry these items. There will be two Gospel readings, one at the Eastern side of the church, and one at the Western entrance to the church. All of those physically able are encouraged to participate in the procession!

Following the liturgical celebration and procession, a catered meal will be served in the church hall. The meal will be prepared by Anthony's (Johnstown) and feature chicken filets, pene & meat sauce, ham,



meatballs, parsley potatoes, green beans, tossed salad, fruit salad, rolls & butter, and a cake for dessert. Thanks to the generosity of the Altar Society and Ss. Peter& Paul Parish, there is no charge (although a free-will offering basket will be out). You do not need to bring anything but an appetite! All we ask is that you sign-up immediately so we can confirm the number of guests with Anthony's.

Most Holy Theotokos, Save Us!

Holy Apostles Peter & Paul
Interceed for Us!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please Remember, Schedule Adjustment: because of the upcoming combined festal celebrations, be mindful of the adjusted schedule. Divine Liturgy in Pine Hill will be celebrated on Sunday 24 August 2025 at 9 am. We hope, and pray you will be there. Heck, we still pray, even when you're not there! Thank you!

Upcoming Holy Days & Fasting Season: there are two major Holy Days (Transfiguration, 8/19, and Dormition, 8/28) this month. Liturgical celebrations are scheduled for each day. Also, the Dormition Fast is a two-week observation preceding the feast. The Dormition Fast began on 8/14, and ends on 8/28. The General Regulations are as follows: Weekdays are a strict observance (Meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil are typically avoided); Saturdays and Sundays are wine and oil days (Wine and oil are permitted, but meat, dairy, and fish are still avoided) On the Feast of the Transfiguration (August 19) fish is allowed in addition to wine and oil. The fast is undertaken with the guidance of your spiritual Father and adjusted based on individual needs and circumstances

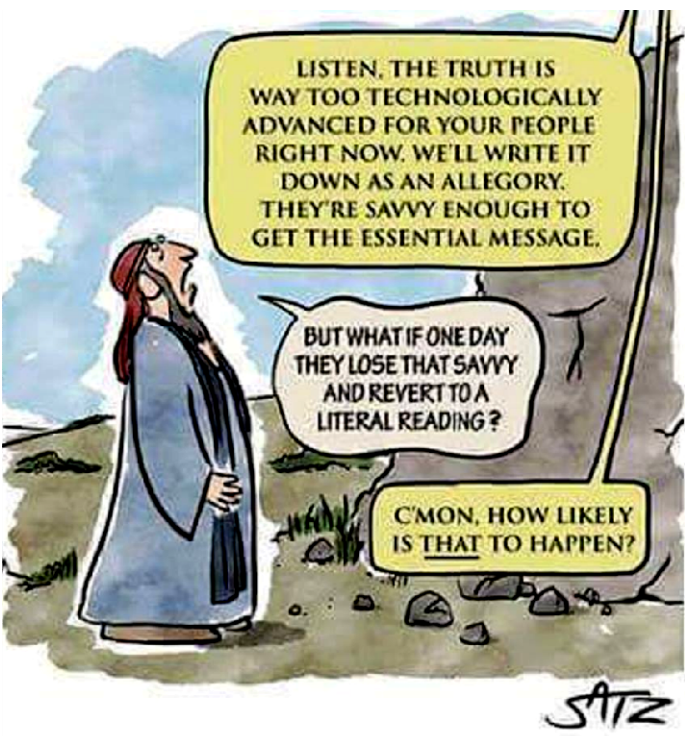
2026 Church Calendar Order: thank you to the following businesses and individuals who pledged support for the annual calendar... Siding Surgeons Inc., Whitehorse Excavating Inc., Several Anonymous Contributors, The Hiller, Hrinko, Kaniuk, & McClellan Families. These are the sponsorships of which Fr. Elijah is aware. Please correct us if we missed you in this list! Fr. Elijah would like to have this list finalized by today (8/17).

Outreach Project: our parishes have sponsored Fr. Andriy Kelt at Bishop Carroll Catholic High School, and because of your generous donations, we also sponsored Fr. Jeremiah G. Lange, O.S.B., Ph.D. Fr. Jeremiah is a priest-monk. Many of you may remember him from his brief tenure as pastor of Our Lady, Queen of the Angels here in Central City. Thank you, for your support of these educators!

Light of Orthodoxy: our Archdiocesan semi-annual publication, the Light Of Orthodoxy, is available on our website as a PDF document. A copy is also hanging on our bulletin board for anyone who would like to read it. If you want a copy and do not have access, please let Fr. Elijah know.

Back to School: we will have a blessing for students, teachers, and parents next Sunday at the end of Divine Liturgy in Pine Hill. Don't be shy, come forward and start the new school year with a blessing!

Flowers for the Feast Day: there will be small, but tasteful flower arrangements for the combined feast day celebration at the end of this month. Anyone that likes may contribute toward those costs. Thank you!



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: BLESSING FRUIT ON THE TRANSFIGURATION

By: Pprotopresbyter George D. Konstantopoulos

Why do we bring grapes, and by extension other fruits (with edible skins) to the church on the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord?

On the Holy Feast-Day of Transfiguration (Metamorphosis) on August 6th (19th) our tradition calls that the Orthodox Christian faithful bring fruits and even vegetables to be blessed on this day. The most common fruit to be blessed are grapes.

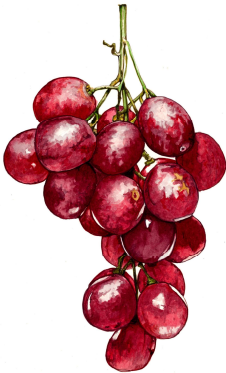
The blessing of fruits i.e., grapes, apples, etc., as well as vegetables on this day, is one very beautiful custom of our Holy Church. The practice signifies the final transfiguration of all things in Christ our Savior. “It signifies the ultimate flowering and fruitfulness of all creation in the Paradise of God’s Kingdom of Life where all will be transformed by the Glory of the Lord”. This is an early Christian tradition. The first week of August, on the sixth of August, the farmers used to gather the first fruits of their summer harvest (grapes, figs, etc.) and to offer thanks to God and offer them to the Church to be blessed and then to give them to the faithful present at the Divine Liturgy as a blessing to them. These fruits are called the “beginnings.”

In a text from the 7th century (“the laws of the kingdom”) by Emperor Constantine Porfirogenitos this tradition is described clearly: “The Emperor of Constantinople gathers the “beginnings” (“aparches”) in Chalcedon, where there are many vines, and then he waits for the Patriarch of Constantinople to come on the Holy Day of the Transfiguration of Christ, to bless the fruits and to personally hand out the grapes to the faithful.

This tradition is adhered to in various parts of Greece where they grow grapes. Saint John Chrysostom wrote: “Plowman receives fruit from the earth not so much for his labor and diligence, as out of the goodness of God Who grows this fruit, because neither is he that plants anything, neither he that waters, but God that gives the increase”.

Grapes are brought to church because they are directly connected to the Holy Eucharistic Mystery (Sacraments); that is why in the prayer for the blessing of grapes the priest says, “Bless, Lord, this new fruit of the vine which reached ripeness because Thou kindly provided god weather, drops of rain and stillness. Let eating this fruit of vine makes us joyful. And give us the honor of offering this fruit to Thee, as the gift of purging of sins, altogether with the Holy Body of Thy Christ.

In the first centuries of Christianity, the faithful brought forth to the church the fruit and crops of the new harvest: bread, wine, olive oil, incense, wax, honey, etc. Of all these offerings, only bread, wine, incense, olive oil, and wax were taken to the altar, while the rest was used for the needs of the clergy and the poor whom the church was caring for. These offerings were to express gratitude to God for all goods, but at the same time help servants of God and people in need. Until today, the consecration of bread and wine, eggs and milk and other food has been kept in the consecration of artos (bread) in the church and meals at home on Pascha. Consecration of flowers and tree branches is performed now on Palm Sunday, the days of the Holy Trinity and Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and on Sunday of the week of the Veneration of the Cross. Rice with raisins and honey are used as offering in services for the dead and remembrance repast.



I ask all of you to learn and appreciate the Orthodox Christian tradition and to practice them!

“Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save him, the Lord shall raise him up” – James, 5: 14-15

Abp. Nathaniel Mat. Sasha	Abp. Melchisedek Mat. Laryssa	Abp. Michael Fr. Jim	Fr. Michael Mat. Sarah	Mat. Valeria	
Allison	Elaine	Charles	Katie	Mike	Pat
Sandi	Stephanie	Sophie	Nancy	Chrystyna	Damian
Noah	Emma	Henry	Natalia	Peter	Ashley
Mary-Evelyn	Bryan	Gregory	Debbie	Nancy	Mike
Donna	Kevin	Nick	Anne	Nick	Agnes
Robert	Mary Etta	Cory	Sharon	Kara	Michelle M.
Helen	Sandy	Kenneth	Scott	Jon	Rhonda
Bill	Sam	Betty	Jerry	Allan	Julie
Charles	Dakota	Kathy	Sue	Debbie	Ruth
Mary-Elizabeth	Darcel	Jennifer	Mary	Karis	Jeremiah
Lisa	Thelma	Shane	Mary Ann	Peter	Lawrence
Jonathan	Tammy	Kathie	Chris	Larry	Matthew
Betty Lou	Renée	Alexandra	Roxanne	Alexis	Gordon
Izzy	James	Curtis	Lita	Suzanne	Shirley-Ruth
George	Jean	Dale	Allen	Steven	Jim
Mitch	Johnnie	Charles	Nancy	Annette	Darren
Johnnie-Mac	David	Agnes	Barbara	Katherine	Joseph
Jan	Larry	Daniel	Monica	Dwain	Michael
Magdalena	Dorothy	Francesca	Kara	Andrew	Tim
Taissia	Daniel	Barbara	Mary Ann	Dave	Ashley
James	Eric	Mary-Louise	Barbara	Denise	Rachelle
Andy	Andrea	Amanda	John, Jr.	Mike	Jean
Ann	Mark	Samantha	Susan	Mary	Maria
Robert	Tim	Don	Mary Ann	Judith	Roxanne
Phyllis	George	Mary	Heidi	Dee Ann	Christine
Jeanne	Tim	Samantha	Bernie	Gene	Kim
Eleanor	John	Dave	Chuck	Anna-Sophie	Betty
Ray	Helen	Maryann	Julia	Jim	Antoinette
Shirley	Greg	Megan	Bob	Ann-Marie	Marie
Walt	Edward	Shaun	Hayes	Sue Y.	Donna
Betty	Robert	Jennifer	Ron	Linda	Gloria
Judy	Richie	Ray	McKenzie	Brady	Betty
Richard	Josephine	Shirley	Sandy	Karl	Gail
Janet	Tammy	Donna	John S.	Paige	Michelle B.
Pastor Dave	Keith	Johannes	Marcella	Linda	Gladys
Tammy	Jodi	Nancy K.	Rod	Larry	Ansley
Marsha	George	Louise	Jessica	Matthew	James
Mike	Hannah	Mary Ann	Lubomyr	Tom	Lilly
Emerson	Cairo	Gary	Cindy	Amy	Jim

Do you have prayer intentions? Remember you may add or remove intentions at any time. You do not have to be members of our parish, or even Orthodox to be placed on the list!



TRANSFIGURED BY HUMILITY

By: Fr. Philip LeMasters

It is easy to become discouraged by the distortions of Christianity in our culture. Some preach that those who truly believe will become rich and healthy with no problems at all. More assume that following Jesus Christ is just another way to have a bit of inner peace as they pursue what is really important in life: professional success, personal fulfillment, or some other worldly goal on their own terms. Neither approach, however, has much to do with truly participating in the life of our Lord.

Even a quick glance at Jesus Christ, His mother the Theotokos, or apostles such as St. Paul shows how weak such teachings are. They did not live what any mainstream culture—then or now—thinks of as a happy or successful life. Obviously, they lived the best and holiest of lives; they are models for us in how to live, to die, and enter into glory. But they appear strange to the world because they put the Kingdom of God first and refused to put even their own happiness before God’s will and the humble service of others. They suffered horribly by conventional standards, but thereby participated in a blessedness not of this world. The Son of God lowered Himself in the Incarnation, becoming one of us and even enduring death and descent to Hades in order to conquer them and bring us into His eternal life through His resurrection. He was rejected by the leaders of His own people and brutally executed by the Roman authorities. The Theotokos accepted a scandalous pregnancy as the Lord’s virgin mother and saw her Son murdered by those He came to save. St. Paul endured hardships of all kinds, beatings, imprisonment, and ultimately martyrdom for Christ. These were not wealthy people; their lives did not follow conventional patterns; they were not in favor with the religious and political authorities of their day. They were outsiders and outcasts in many ways, but it was precisely through their difficult struggles that salvation has come to the world and we have inherited the blessings of life eternal.

That is an important truth to keep in mind when we read of the father of the epileptic boy kneeling before Christ to ask for the healing of his son. The disciples had been unable to cure him because of their lack of faith, prayer, and fasting. Consequently, they lacked the spiritual strength to overcome evil. Like most of the other Jews, they probably assumed that following the Messiah—thought to be a great king and military ruler— would result in a privileged life. In their hopes for that kind of savior, the disciples were part of a “faithless and perverse” generation that trusted in and served itself, rather than the one true God. In contrast, the boy’s father had true faith, trust and humility before the Lord, kneeling down before him and asking for mercy from the bottom of his heart. He lowered himself before Christ, putting himself in the lowly place of one who could receive the blessing of the most humble One of all.

Unfortunately, many in the church of Corinth were nothing like that father; they were so full of pride that St. Paul had to set them straight on what it meant to serve Jesus Christ. He wrote that true apostles lived like “men sentenced to death,” as fools who are weak, dishonored, homeless, and treated as the filth of the world. Theirs was not a path for the rich and famous. The words used by St. Paul of his own ministry remind us of how our Lord identified Himself with “the least of these,” the hungry, the stranger, the prisoner, the sick—those on the margins of any society.

How ironic that the same Lord Who identified Himself with the wretched and miserable, and whose apostles suffered so greatly, was transfigured in glory before His disciples on Mt. Tabor. As He shone with the brilliant light of heaven and was shown to be superior to Moses and Elijah, the voice of the Father said “This is my beloved Son with Whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!” The divine glory of this most exalted One shines through the apparent weakness of a cross and a tomb, through what looked like failure and foolishness in the world as we know it. Indeed, He glorifies martyrs, confessors, and others who truly take up their crosses and die to the idolatry of self that is the real religion of so many, regardless of what we

say we believe. To this very day, those who share in His glory first participate in His lowliness, meekness, and humility.

Despite what some of Christianity’s supporters and some of its foes like to say, our Lord’s salvation is not an extension of any earthly kingdom, culture, or achievement. Instead of building ourselves up according to designs of false gods, we must lower ourselves before Him like the father of the epileptic in order to be transfigured by His grace. We must go against the popular trends of our culture—and of any culture— in order to believe, pray, and deny ourselves if we are to open ourselves to His brilliant light, if we are to become radiant with His holiness. The journey to His Kingdom has nothing to do with acquiring earthly power, prominence, or popularity. As much as in the first century, His Kingdom is still not of this world. And some of the most dangerous temptations are to distort the Christian faith in the service of any worldly goal or agenda, regardless of the name it goes by at the time.

Instead of following the easy paths today of worshiping money, power, pleasure, and other forms of self-indulgence, we must follow the advice of the Lord Himself to the disciples on the necessity of faith, prayer, and fasting. Instead of believing that success according to the standards of any earthly realm is the highest good, we must entrust our lives to the One whose divinity shines forth through His humility and Who identifies Himself with the outcasts of all times and places.



Instead of defining ourselves by our busy schedules, routines, or obsessions about other earthly cares, we must—and we all can— carve out time every day for spiritual communion with the Lord. Instead of satisfying every desire and wallowing in unrestrained indulgence, we must learn to say no to our addiction to pleasure through appropriate forms of fasting and self-denial on a regular basis. Instead of making our faith a way to get what we want and gain the praise of others, we must learn the essential place of humility in the Christian life. For it is only when we stop focusing on ourselves—our strengths, our virtues, our abilities, as well as our failures and weaknesses—that we will be able to kneel before Christ like that father who was at the end of his rope and open ourselves to the mercy and healing of the Lord.

We have to accept that it is not all about us. If we make our faith basically about helping us get what we want, then we will always serve ourselves and become addicted to self-centered desires. We will become so enslaved to our bellies, our entertainment, our will, and our false hopes for fulfillment that we will become just like the disciples: powerless against the forces of evil in our own lives and totally unable to help others. If we serve and please only ourselves, we will become so self-focused and self-centered that we will find it impossible to cultivate the humility required to serve God and our neighbors. We will become so addicted to our desires that we will lack the ability to say no to ourselves for any reason, which is ultimately a recipe for nothing but despair.

Far better to look to Christ who came not to be served, but to serve, and Whose glory had nothing in common with worldly domination or success. He will transfigure us into participants in His divine glory through our humble faith, prayer, and fasting. In this season of the Dormition Fast, we follow the example of the Theotokos who was prepared and sustained for her sublime ministry by these spiritual disciplines. The same is true of St. Paul and the apostles. There is hard work involved when we embrace humility, obedience, and self-denial. Should that be surprising if we serve a Lord Who told us to take up our crosses and follow Him? If our goal is to become so permeated with holiness that we radiate the divine beauty, should we be shocked that sacrifice is required?

By investing ourselves in the basic disciplines of the Christian life we will become more like the father of the epileptic boy who, in his humble faith, received the mercy and healing of the Lord. That is a blessing beyond the ability of this world and the only hope for the salvation of our souls.