



“He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do” (John 14:12)

The month of August marks the close of the Liturgical Year. Two of the Great Feasts of our Holy Church occur in August: The Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord and the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos. As disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are called to follow Him. Each person is given different gifts, different talents and different experiences by our Lord. Just as we all share in Holy Communion and in uniting ourselves with Him and with one another, so too, we share to some degree in His Transfiguration and His Resurrection.

In the Troparion (hymn) for the Transfiguration we sing:

“Thou wast transfigured upon the mountain O Christ our God, showing Thy glory to Thy disciples as far as they were able to bear it. At the intercessions of the Theotokos, make Thine everlasting light shine forth also upon us sinners. O Giver of light, glory to Thee.”

Our father among the saints, St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica,

established the Orthodox teaching concerning God's essence and God's energies. St. Gregory affirmed that just as Moses was not permitted to see God's face, (for God said to Moses 'no man can see my face and live'), nevertheless, we can experience God's 'energies' as He reveals Himself to us. According to Archimandrite George, Abbot of St. Gregoriou Monastery on Mt. Athos, "Let us give a relevant example from things human. If we grasp a bare electric wire, we will die. However, if we connect a lamp to the same wire, we are illuminated. We see, enjoy, and are assisted by, the energy of electric current, but we are not able to grasp its essence. Let us say that something similar happens with the uncreated energy of God.

Archimandrite George also writes about how we participate in God's energies through the Grace which is given to us in the Holy Church through the process of theosis. "What a great blessing that we commune through the immaculate Mysteries! Christ becomes ours; the life of Christ becomes ours; His blood becomes our blood. St. John Chrysostom says that God has nothing more to give man than what he gives him in Holy Communion. Man cannot ask anything more of God than what he receives from Christ in Holy Communion. So, being baptised, chrismated, confessing, we commune through the Body and Blood of the Lord, and we too become gods by Grace; we unite with God; we are no longer strangers, for we have become familiar with God. Inside the Church in which we unite with God, we live this new reality which Christ brought to the world: the new creation. This is the life of the Church, of Christ, which becomes ours as a gift from the Holy Spirit. Everything in the Church leads to Theosis; the Holy Liturgy, the Mysteries, divine Worship, the Gospel sermon, the fasting; all of these lead to this one thing. The Church alone is the place of Theosis."

As our Holy Fathers have pointed out, the birth of the Theotokos takes place near the beginning of the Church's Liturgical Year and her Holy

Dormition takes place near the end. This Feast of the Dormition represents as it were, a parallel to our Lord's Resurrection from the dead. The Mother of God died as all people die and then she was raised up by her Son as the Mother of Life and participates already in the eternal life of paradise which is prepared and promised to all who 'hear the word of God and keep it.'

The Mother of God is our model and example of the path all Christians must follow. Just as Mary lived a holy life of humility, obedience and love, so all Christians are called to achieve these virtues with God's help. And just as Mary became a temple of the living God, so too we are called to become temples of the living

God and share in the eternal life of His Kingdom.

What Grace is available to us from our Lord and His Holy Mother through our Holy Church! Let us celebrate with joy these two great feasts that we have been given that we too may grow in the Grace and Light of the Holy Spirit!

In Christ, +Fr. Gregory