



My Beloved Ones,

This Sunday we are blessed to celebrate the feast of our Lord's Transfiguration. When the August 6th falls on a Sunday, the usual rubrics for the Divine Liturgy are replaced by the celebratory Liturgy of the Transfiguration. This Feast is a special observation as it one of the major Feasts of our Lord which commemorates a miracle that that occurred to Himself, and not others.

Shortly before His Crucifixion, our Lord brought the "inner circle" of His Disciples—Peter, James and John—with Him to pray on Mount Tabor. The Evangelist Luke tells us that the Disciples were resting, but they awoke to an amazing sight: there, at the summit of the mountain stood the Transfigured Christ. His "...appearance... was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white" (Luke 9:29). Also amazing was the presence of Moses and Elijah, "*who spoke of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem*". Peter suggests to Christ that they "...make

three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah" (Luke 9:30). Finally, completing the miraculous nature of the event, the voice of the Father was heard telling the Disciples "*This is my Son, my Beloved; listen to him!*" (Luke 9:35).

During this manifestation of Christ's two natures, an important detail that should not be overlooked is Peter's misunderstanding of the significance of the event. Human beings have the tendency to think in materialistic terms, often because we chose to focus on the physical reality of what we can see in front of us, rather than the spiritual reality which God intends for us to see.

Only days before, Peter had grown in his discipleship by correctly praising Jesus as the Son of God. Now, when he is presented with Christ in His glorified state—as well as confirmation of Christ's Death and Resurrection as the fulfillment of both the Law (through Moses) and the Prophets (through Elijah)—Peter is instead blinded by material matters. Instead of focusing on the miracle's preparation for salvation, he wishes to prolong the miracle to bask in the presence of these great men. As a faithful man, his intentions were not impure, but misguided. Only after his misunderstanding does the voice of our Father appear, as He did during the Baptism in the Jordan—to guide us all toward our true focus, which is Christ.

My beloved ones, the path to discipleship is not an easy task. Peter, who was the first to proclaim his Teacher as God, made this mistake merely days later (and it would certainly not be his last before the Crucifixion of our Lord). Let us use the coming Feast of the Transfiguration to prayerfully consider the ways in which we too can focus more on the glory of God, and not our own understanding.

+ALEXIOS

Metropolitan of Atlanta