



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

PARISH OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LADY, “EVANGELISMOS”

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THE TRANSFIGURATION

EPISTLE The Reading is from the Second General Epistle of Peter

[1:10-19] Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding *you*, knowing that shortly I *must* put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.” And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

EXPLANATION: This letter by Peter was most likely written in 63-67AD during his imprisonment in Rome. His major theme is that Christians must grow continually in holiness and virtue and pursue an entrance into the **everlasting kingdom** which is to come. If virtues

and holiness are not present at all in them, they have forgotten their baptismal cleansing from the old sins and will become spiritually blind and unable to perceive knowledge of God and the Truth. Therefore, because of this danger, they must **be all the more diligent** and eager to recognize that Christ called them in baptism and chose them from out of the world. So if they pursue virtue vigorously, this will make their status as Christ's disciples more certain and less likely to fall into apostasy (**never trip**). **(1:10)** In this way they will be **richly supplied with an entrance into the eternal kingdom**. That is, they will not only enter the kingdom, but will be richly rewarded upon their arrival. **(1:11)** Peter then comes to the main purpose of his Epistle, which is to **remind** them of the necessity for godliness and to warn them against the dangers of popular false teachings. **(1:12)** He **regards it as righteous**, as his duty before God, to constantly remind them, both now and in this letter and until the end. He does this all the more so since he **knows** that the removal of his **tabernacle is imminent**. By tabernacle he means the temporary **tent** of his body in which he dwells during his life on earth. He knows that his death will occur soon, because Christ revealed to him that he was to glorify God through his martyrdom. (John 21: 18-19) **(1:13-14)** Just as he urged the Christians to "be diligent" **(1:10)** , so Peter intends **also to be diligent** in such reminders, so that his hearers may have these things in memory after his death. **(1:15)** In reminding them of the glory to come in the heavenly kingdom, Peter emphasizes the truthfulness of this hope. Many false teachers deny such a hope at the end of times and say these things are fairy tales. However, Peter rebukes these denials. He and the other apostles did not **follow cunningly devised fables**. When they were **made known to the church the power and coming of Christ**, this was no myth, but sober historical fact, for they became **eyewitnesses of His majesty**. That is, the apostles transmitted truths given directly by God. They beheld the future glory of the Second Coming with their own eyes. **(1:16)** This occurred at

the Transfiguration when Jesus **received from God the Father honour and glory** and they **heard His voice which came from heaven** when they were with Jesus on the holy mountain. This Peter says, proves the reality of the Second Coming, for Christ Himself pointed to the Transfiguration as a foretaste and proof of His future glory. **(1:17-19)**

GOSPEL Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” And when the disciples heard they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, “Arise, and do not be afraid.” When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.”

EXPLANATION: The Transfiguration is a theophany – a manifestation of God, especially of the divinity of Christ, through a display of His uncreated divine energy. Christ took only three apostles up to the holy mountain with Him to witness His majesty and the reality of the Second Coming. The Transfiguration is a foretaste and proof of the Second Coming of Christ and of His future glory. Christ took **Peter** because of Peter’s strong love for Him; He took **John**, because Christ loved him, and He took **James**, because James, too was zealous. **(17:1)** Christ’s face **shone like the sun** because God is light. The bright cloud, the shining of His face and the whiteness of His garment, all demonstrate that Jesus is God. When you hear “transfigured”, do not think that He cast off His body at that moment, for His body remained in its own form, but it appeared more resplendent, the divine exhibiting in small part its effulgence as much

as the apostles were able to see. **(17:2)** Why did Moses and Elijah appear? To show that Jesus is the Lord of the Law and the Prophets, and of the living and of the dead. For Elijah was a prophet and still lived, while Moses was a lawgiver and had died. They also appeared to dispel the opinion of some who said that Jesus was Elijah or one of the prophets. **(17:3)** Peter, out of great love, did not want Christ to suffer the Passion. That is why he asked Jesus to remain on the holy mountain and the apostles would build three tabernacles, one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elijah. **(17:4)** But while Peter was still speaking a **bright cloud overshadowed them** and God the Father said, **“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”** He does not say, “This has become My beloved Son”, but “This is My beloved Son”, indicating that this divine glory is Christ’s by nature. From eternity, Christ is God’s Son, fully sharing in the essence of the Father. Jesus Christ is God of God. “Hear Him” teaches that if Jesus willeth to suffer and be crucified, do not oppose Him, for it was for this reason He became man so that He could suffer and die for the sins of mankind. **(17:5)** The apostles, hearing God’s voice, fell to the ground in fear. They were dazed by the vision and Jesus came and touched them and told them to rise and not be afraid. **(17:6-7)** Out of humility, Jesus orders them not to tell anyone, and also, so that those who might hear such things would not later be scandalized when they saw Him crucified. For they would think that He was a deceiver who had conjured up God-like visions. **(17:8-9)** Finally, the Holy Trinity is manifest here, for Christ is transfigured, the Father speaks from heaven testifying to Jesus’s divine sonship, and the Holy Spirit is present in the form of a dazzling light surrounding Christ’s Person, overshadowing the whole mountain. **(17:5)**