

The Divine Light of the Transfiguration and the Enhypostatic Illumination of our Hearts

*A sacred ascent to the noetic Mount Tabor with the eyewitness of the Divine Majesty, the Holy Apostle Peter, as our guide**

“We were with Him on the Holy Mount” (II St. Peter 1:18)

A. All “equally precious” according to the Faith

The Holy Apostle Peter, as a genuine spiritual Shepherd, addresses himself to Christians in his God-inspired epistles, in order to draw up their minds to great heights, to another noetic Tabor, so that they, also, might become “eyewitnesses of the majesty” of Christ our Savior.

The method employed by the Chief Apostle in *drawing us up* is genuinely pastoral. He knows that he is addressing himself to people who are still “*novices and imperfect*” and who “*have not been vouchsafed noetic illumination of the heart*”; consequently, the constant banishment of *lethe* (forgetfulness) and *ignorance* from their minds is needed, by means of *remembrance* and *knowledge* in Christ, so that, shaking off *indolence*, they might embark on the sacred *ascent*.

“I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things”; “I think it is meet to stir up your sincere minds by way of remembrance.”

The Chief Apostle gives us a powerful first impetus upwards when he reminds and assures us that we are “*equally precious*” with the Holy Apostles as regards the “*Faith*,” which affords us equal privileges and equal honor:

“to those who have obtained like precious faith with us [the Apostles].”

Living and active Faith purifies the hearts of the simple and “insignificant” believers no less than the hearts of the prominent and notable, and unites them with Christ our Savior.

All of us Christians have been vouchsafed the lofty gift of receiving “*one and the same rebirth*” and have become “*children of God*.”



“Since Christians are born of one and the same Father, even God; and from one and the same Mother, the Church; and from one and the same womb, the holy Font, they are, for this reason, all one kind, and receive one and the same form,” and, in consequence, they are *“equally precious”* according to the Faith.

The Chief Apostle, then, greatly consoles the believers who are yet *“novices and imperfect,”* so as to awaken them from their *indolence* and draw them towards higher things, for

“just as they are equally precious with him according to the Faith, so shall they become equal in glory as well, should they come to love Christ with the same measure of the Faith whereby he also loved Him.”

Even though it is bestowed *“equally,”* the sacred Faith nevertheless either *increases* or *decreases*:

“It increases and grows in Christians who are virtuous, perfect, and of noble conduct; but it decreases inversely and diminishes in Christians of little faith, who have a worldly and base mentality.”

B. “As unto a light that shineth in a dark place”

But how, O Holy Apostle Peter, are we to rise above our *worldly* and *base* mentality, that the purifying, illuminating, and deifying Faith might increase in us?

The Chief Apostle now puts us in remembrance of the revelatory experience he was vouchsafed on Mount Tabor and, at the same time, impels us yet higher.

“We were eyewitnesses of his majesty,” “being with Him on the holy mount.” We saw the raiment of our Master Christ shining like light in the Divine Transfiguration! We saw our Savior in His Divine glory, *“covered with light as with a garment”!*

Of course, the Chief Apostle elucidates, our material and created eyes saw on Tabor the uncreated Light of Divinity, which flashed forth in a strange manner through the created human nature of our Lord; our eyes did not, however, see the immaterial Light simply by their natural power alone, but only after having been strengthened *“by the supernatural Grace and powers of God.”*

Hence, now *“the word of prophecy is more sure.”* And *“insofar as you are novices and imperfect, and have not been vouchsafed noetic illumination*

in your hearts,” it is good and beneficial to take heed of words of prophecy.

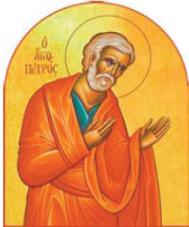
Such words, though superior to the Law, are nevertheless inferior to the words of the Gospel; that is why they illumine your hearts and confirm them in the Mysteries of Christ, but only faintly. Therefore, the light of Faith is sufficient for the present, now when you are yet “novices.” Take heed of it, “as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.”

However, it must be increased and augmented!

C. The deifying “Dayspring” in our hearts

Until when, O Chief Apostle, shall we take heed of the imperfect “word of prophecy”?

Not forever, the Divine Peter consoles and bolsters us, not even your entire life long. But “until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” Until the noetic Day and the Daystar, Christ our Savior, “mystically arises in your hearts through the illumination of the Holy Spirit.”



Then, “He, the Giver of the Law and Lord of the Prophets, Who inspired the Prophets with the prophesies—He, I say, dwells in your hearts by Grace and His Divine Light; and He mystically teaches you not only the Mystery of the Incarnate Economy, but also other mystical and secret dogmas of higher theology, to the extent that they can be comprehended; and He gives you inner assurance and makes you established believers!”

Our Shepherd, Who speaks of the mysteries and loves His children, has already drawn us up to the peak and summit of Tabor!

And how, O Chief Apostle, is this strange-sounding and supernatural illumination of the Divine Comforter brought about in our hearts? How are we to start, and what follows next? And how is this sacred activity brought to completion?

“Firstly,” says the Chief Apostle, “it is brought about through the practice of all of the life-giving and deifying commandments of the Lord.”

“Secondly,” he continues, “through the acquisition of all of the virtues—as much the practical ones as the theoretic—and, indeed, principally by means of noetic and unceasing prayer meditated in the heart with a mournful spirit.”

Through all of these things, *“and especially through mourning and tears, the heart and all of the inner man are purified of predispositions and passions, as much the bodily—such as gluttony, hedonism, carnality, and the rest—as the spiritual, namely arrogance, vainglory, unbelief, cowardice, and the rest.*

Further assiduous work is needed, however; for following the purification of the heart of such terrible passions,

“the person then takes care also to acquire the golden sequence of godlike virtues: peace from thoughts, which is a gift containing spiritual gifts; humility, wrought by the Holy Spirit; meekness, fraternal affection, and the pinnacle of all of the virtues, love.”

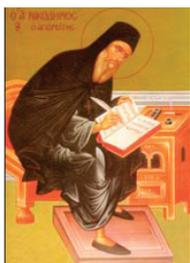
In the meantime, *“the more illumined”* the Christian *“becomes by his works of light, and the more he approaches the true and first Light, God”*—being continuously purified *“of every sin”* through partaking of the Immaculate Mysteries *“with fear and a contrite heart”*—, he thereby all the more completes the arduous stage of *purifying ascent*, whereupon

“his mind has returned—and not only his mind to itself through noetic restoration in the heart, but it has also returned all of the other powers of the soul to itself, and has rendered them noetic, too, in a way.

In this supernatural state, the person

“has ascended above every sensible and noetic being and every thought of such beings, and presents himself, deaf and dumb, to God; and, like an unformed substance, he is formed and shaped by Divine Grace.”

Then, oh, then! the Chief Apostle continues, the *cloud of Tabor* descends upon the zealot of the Divine Glory. His heart is *illumined*; that is, it receives the illumination of the Holy Spirit and



“is enlightened by a noetic, but at the same time real, enlightenment of the Holy Spirit—Who abides in the heart—that is not dispersed as are knowledge” and illumination brought about through thoughts, which illumination *“exists momentarily, as a flash of lightning, simultaneously appearing and disappearing, wherefore it is called unhypostatic.”*

Divine illumination, on the other hand, which *“remains in those who are illumined”* because *“it is deeply engraved,”* *“that is, it does not appear and*

disappear, but remains in the soul,” is called by the Saints “*enhypostatic*” and “*hypostatic light,*” which is both “*personal*” and “*enhypostatic.*”

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“*Come, let us ascend the Lord’s mountain!*” The *purifying climb* is arduous. The spiritual darkness of *lethe, ignorance, and indolence, “of the thrice-gloomy darkness of ignorance,”* deters the soul from Divine ascents.

The Chief of the Apostles exhorts us: let us make a start! Let us have “*sincere minds,*” such that they might be “*stirred up*” and begin the godly *ascent.*

And, on our toilsome journey, let us constantly chant:

“Shine forth on us sinners Thine eternal light, through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Giver of Light, glory to Thee!”

(*) This “Ascent” was ventured with the aid of the following blessed texts from our Sacred Tradition: “Interpretation of II St. Peter” (chapters 1 and 3), “Interpretation of I St. John” (chapters 1 and 7), and “Interpretation of the second Canon of the Transfiguration,” (Ninth Ode, second *Troparion*), works of the sublime Hesychast, St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite.