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### *Bishop NIKON*

#### REFLECTIONS ON FORTY YEARS OF PRIESTLY MINISTRY

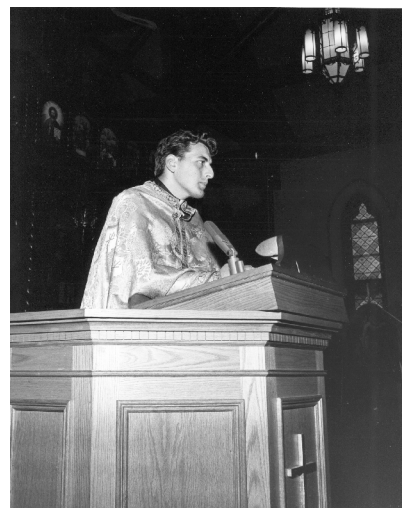
*On July 6, Bishop NIKON celebrated his fortieth anniversary of priestly ordination.*

**ONE:** Your Grace, what was it that led you to priestly ministry? **Bishop NIKON:** I grew up in a family whose life was centered around the Church. We were in Church every Sunday, my father was a member of the parish council, my mother directed the choir, and my brothers and I served in the altar; every Friday night we went to choir rehearsal. It was a way of life. In my house, you knew if it was lent without a calendar, you could tell by the way the house smelled from the food that was being cooked. My grandmother, she knew all the saints' days by heart. So, I guess I could say that I began to hear a calling to

the priesthood when I was four years old. Someone dragged me into the altar to carry a candle, and I thought, "Wow, this is where I'm supposed to be." Maybe that is very odd, I don't know. But, after that day I first served, unless I was forced to sing in the choir (*laughing*) I've been in the altar every Sunday ever since.

**ONE:** Tell us about your ordination.

**+NIKON:** I was ordained by Bishop STEPHEN (Lasko) on July 6, 1969 at St. George Cathedral in Boston during the diocesan assembly of the Albanian Archdiocese. (It was Bishop STEPHEN who was in-



Bishop NIKON, then Father Nicholas Liolin, preaching on the day of his ordination, July 6 1969.

*Reflections to 3*

### *New England Youth Rally: Beginnings*

In August of 1981, Father Job Osacky—a priest from Western PA well known for his work with youth—was invited to serve as the retreat master of a youth retreat at Dormition of the Virgin Mary Church in Cumberland, RI. The twenty five young participants at that gathering were enthusiastic about their experience. Fr. Job was later invited to return to New England, not only as retreat master for the retreat in Cumberland the following year, but ultimately to serve as Bishop of New England. Under Bishop JOB's guidance, the Diocese experimented with a regional format for youth retreats, which included events in Ansonia, Terry-

ville and Cumberland. However, the turnout for these was not very encouraging. Twenty years earlier, in 1962 as a young man, Bishop JOB had attended a Monday-through-Saturday youth retreat at St. Sava Monastery in Libertyville, IL. Recalling the powerful impact that this experience had on him; how fellow participants spoke about it years afterward; and how it had been seminal in his own journey to the priesthood, Bishop JOB was inspired to use a Monday-through-Saturday format for the Diocese of New England, and Youth Rally was born.

That first Youth Rally in the summer of 1986 set the pattern

for years to come. A typical day began with morning prayers; breakfast followed by religious education; lunch; and then some kind of excursion. The excursions included the Williams Zoo; Scarborough Beach; Lincoln Woods Lake for fresh water swimming; and Rocky Point (amusement park) in Warwick RI. In a recent interview, Archbishop JOB recalled one of the more memorable outings, when they reenacted the sea battle from the movie *Ben Hur* at Roger Williams park in the lagoon with the paddle boats. One year, however, a paddle boat capsized, and though

*Beginnings to 4*

## *Holy Trinity Cathedral, Boston MA*

On May 31st the parishioners of Holy Trinity Cathedral, together with His Grace, Bishop Nikon celebrated the 25th anniversary of Father Robert and Susan Arida's ministry in the Holy Trinity Cathedral parish.

The festivities began with the Divine Liturgy celebrated by His Grace, Bishop Nikon; clergy from the Diocese of New England; and the faithful. A festive dinner for the parishioners and guests followed at the cathedral.

Bishop Nikon presented Father Robert with a Commendation of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America in recognition of his 25 years of faithful service. The parishioners of the Holy Trinity Cathedral presented the Aridas with an icon of the Mother of God of the Sign, the work of iconographer Mirra Meylakh; a commemorative book reflecting 25 years of memories in photographs and stories; and a monetary gift.

Father Robert was ordained in 1981 and served for two years at Holy Assumption Church in



Father Robert and Susan Arida with Bishop NIKON at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Boston

Stamford before coming to Holy Trinity in Boston. He and Susan have served the Holy Trinity community in faith and with love for a quarter of its 100-year history, personifying the reality of the presence of Christ in our midst and embodying the self-emptying love of the Lord in their service. The recent words of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow could have been spoken about Father Robert: "[In our time,] when people no longer believe in spoken words, the life of the priest must be a constant sermon by its acts."

Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral has been a solid presence in the Fenway since the 1950s, when it relocated from its first home in Roxbury.

Father Robert and Susan have not only served the cathedral faithful, but they have encouraged them to reach out to the wider Fenway neighborhood community, many of whom benefit from the Saint Herman Food Pantry.

May God grant the Aridas many more years of devoted ministry and witness!



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## *Three Saints Church, Ansonia CT*

By Barbara Ann Dixon

A great big THANK YOU to Nancy Krupa and her helpers, Janet Coppola, Alexandra Mastej and Tatiana Prys for preparing the gardens on the church grounds. Nancy is our "GARDNER In-Chief" and does a fantastic job

with the beautification of the Church grounds. Also, thanks to Sasha and Tatiana Prys for planting the marigolds near the rectory; and our neighbor John for trimming all the bushes and sweeping up all the sand from the harsh

winter. Many Years to all for their hard work and dedication. Sunday May 10<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> Mary Jimenez worked hard with our annual plant sale and had a successful event despite the rain on both Sundays. Great work.

Three Saints from 2

Saturday, May 16, our youth group, parishioners, friends and families (28 persons in all) and 50 members of Holy Ghost parish in Bridgeport attended the Bluefish vs. Newark Bears game at Harbor Yard. (Naturally, the Bluefish won 10 – 6). Father Michael sang God Bless America during the seventh inning stretch. Plans are underway for two more outings – Wednesday, July 1 and Saturday, August 22.

MaryAnn Kendall assisted the children with a Pascha Skit that was enjoyed by all.

Congratulations to John Krot, son of Libby Krot, for receiving the NIAA State Award of Merit from Killingly High School. John received this State Award in recognition of his meritorious service, leadership, and special contributions to interscholastic athletics at a local and State level. This award is given to those whose service has been marked by extraor-

dinary personal and professional achievements and exemplary service to the lives of students.

The Senior group had their season closing luncheon at the Valley Diner, Route 34, Derby on Tuesday, June 2. The Bible Study Group held their luncheon at the Blue Colony Diner in Newtown on Thursday, June 4. All sessions of the Senior Group and Bible Study Group will resume in September.



Father Michael Roshak singing God Bless America during the seventh inning stretch.



The children of Three Saints, under the direction of MaryAnn Kendall performing a Pascha skit.

Reflections from 1

strumental in leading the Albanian Archdiocese into the OCA.) I had been ordained to the diaconate the day before, which was not uncommon, but the circumstances surrounding my ordination were quite interesting. The Albanian Archdiocese had been embroiled in a legal controversy for four and a half years. Finally, the legal authorities ruled that the matter needed to be resolved internally by the Archdiocese itself. This was the primary order of business at the assembly, and it was finally resolved at 3 AM on July 5th, and at 11 AM that morning I was ordained to the diaconate. I was attending the assembly as a seminarian observer, and I had spoken with Bishop STEPHEN about ordination, but the legal controversy had to be resolved before I could be ordained. So,

once the controversy was resolved, the bishop ordained me to the diaconate.

ONE: So, you didn't know that you were going to be ordained?!?

+NIKON: Well, I knew that I was going to be ordained, but I didn't know when. So, yes, it was a bit of a surprise to be told at 3 AM that I was going to be ordained at 11 AM that day. To me, there is an important parallel between that Archdiocesan assembly in 1969 when I was ordained and the All American Council last year in Pittsburgh. Going into both meetings, many people thought that the end of the church, as an organization, was near. But, we did not go into those meetings to fail. We went with the faith that the Holy Spirit would guide us, and by the grace of the Spirit, the Church was victorious.

ONE: Where did you serve as a priest?

+NIKON: On July 14, 1969 I was assigned to St. Thomas Church in Detroit, MI. At that time there were about 150 members. I served at St. Thomas from '69 to '72 at which time I was transferred to St. Nicholas Church in Southbridge, MA. I served at St. Nicholas for ten years, and then in 1982 I returned to St. Thomas Church in Detroit to help them with a building project. (laughing) I promised them five years, but stayed for twenty.

ONE: Would you care to say a few words about your wife?

+NIKON: Sarah was my childhood sweetheart. We were married in 1967, and I'd have to say that by God's grace, it was she who gave me the balance that was necessary to serve my communities. I have very good gut instincts, but my wife was very logical. When we would talk, she would encourage me to follow my gut, but when my gut instinct wasn't

*We didn't go into those meetings to fail. We went with the faith that the Holy Spirit would guide us, and by the grace of the Spirit, the Church was victorious.*

*The personal touch is what determines the success or failure of youth ministry.*

### *Beginnings from 1*

there were no injuries, (it was a shallow lagoon) the management was notably displeased. (Two years later Rally was invited to return to the facility.) Whatever the event, participants were always back every day in time for vespers, campfire, and then evening prayers at 10:30.

Thirty-six young people participated in that first Rally which was held in Cumberland RI. An instant success, the number of Youth Rally participants more than doubled with 82 in 1987 the following year, and there were upwards of 145 participants in 1988! Participation levels then evened out at about 125 young people for the next several years. Correspondingly, the adult staff got bigger each year. For several years the Men's Club from New Britain would come for a day to barbecue food for Rally. Vladyka JOB pointed out that the adult participants enjoyed just as good a time as the kids. Often, adults would come for just a day to be im-

mersed in the contagious spirit of Christian fellowship among the young participants. Not only did the youth of the Diocese meet in the summer at Rally, but for several years three-day Rally Reunions were held during Christmas vacation.

Reflecting on his years involved with Youth Rally, Archbishop JOB commented that when he thinks of Youth Rally, he thinks of worship. "Morning prayers. Daily vespers. Parishioners would come to sing, and the kids would join in. The time in church was so well spent, and it was such an integral part of the rally experience. Also, there was real seriousness about the educational program. Kids really learned a lot in those few hours."

In those early days, one of the reasons that Bishop JOB insisted on having at least a week for the rally is so that the kids could build relationships. Other camps were only a few days long, which meant that just as kids were starting to become friends, they'd be separated. Archbishop JOB noted that with a whole week together the kids really got to be friends. Telephone bills dramatically increased after Rally ended. Kids from rally would network, and

organize meetings at other Church events like Orthodox Education Day at St. Vladimir's Seminary. An example of the close bonds that were formed is when a number of Rally kids attended a funeral to support their friend from Rally whose mother had died. "It is the personal value that makes Rally so important: ride a roller coaster with the bishop; interact with dedicated adults and their loving care. Rally is an enriching experience for everybody. I remember two brothers from Norwich who did not want to go, but their parents made a deal to pick them up after three days if they did not like it. At the end the kids asked if next year they could do Rally for two weeks. Just recently, Archdeacon Roman's funeral was attended by numerous Rally kids who now have kids of their own. The personal touch is what determines success or failure of youth ministry."

It is this spirit of Christian community, nurturing the zeal of the youth, and focusing it on Christ and His Holy Church that has firmly rooted the New England Youth Rally in the ongoing life of our Diocese.

## *New England Youth Rally: Today*

*Fr. John Hopko, Youth Director*

Each year, for a week in the summertime, the Diocesan Youth Rally takes place. This has been happening for years and years now. Many adult members of the Diocese fondly remember attending Rally or other Orthodox Christian summer youth programs as children.

Last year Youth Rally 2008 took place, as in recent previous years, at the Saint Methodios Faith and Heritage Center in Contoocook, New Hampshire. The Center is a camp and retreat center owned and operated by the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston. This summer Youth Rally 2009 will take place at the Faith and Heri-

tage Center from Monday, August 10, until Saturday, August 15.

At Rally 2008 there were 45 children between the ages of 10 and 17 participating as "Rallyers", with 15 adult staff members, for a total of 60 participants. All diocesan youth who have completed fifth grade and have not yet celebrated their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday are eligible to attend the Youth Rally. Adult volunteers serve as pastoral and health staff and as cabin and activity counselors.

Rally follows the rhythms that have been established during the past Rallies that have been held in Contoocook. Liturgical services are

held every morning, afternoon and evening in the beautiful, onsite chapel. Choir Rehearsals and Educational Sessions are held in the earlier part of each day and other activities, such as time at the waterfront, arts and crafts, sports and games, trail-walking, etc., are held in the latter part of the day. On Wednesday evening during last year's Rally all the participants went on a field trip to the Canobie Lake Amusement Park.

A highlight of this year's Rally will be the celebration of the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos on Saturday, August 15. We hope that as in past

*Last summer forty five children, between the ages of 10 and 17, attended Youth Rally.*

*Homo Adorans* from 4

years we will be blessed with a visit from our Diocesan Hierarch, His Grace, Bishop NIKON of Boston.

A yearly concern about Rally is covering the costs of the event. The actual cost of Rally 2008 was about \$470 per Rallyer. Yet, the Diocese only charged attendance fees of \$125.00 per child, with a reduced charge of \$75.00 for the second child from any given family. All subsequent children from that same family are admitted to Rally free of charge. So no family pays more than \$200.00 in Rally attendance fees for their children. (At Rally 2008 there were 11 sets of siblings totaling 25 children at Rally! More than half of the children at Rally 2008 had a brother or sister present.) The Diocese also charged each child who rode the Diocesan-provided bus to and from Rally a \$40.00 charge.

For Rally 2008 the actual receipts for Rally were \$1200.00 in bus fees and \$4620.00 in Rally fees, for a total of \$5820.00 in fees received. Given the estimated actual Rally cost of about \$21,000.00, we see that fees cover less than 30% of the actual cost of Rally!

Where does the rest of the money come from to pay for Rally? It comes from the Diocese of New England and specifically from the money raised by the Diocese of New England's ONE STEWARDS program. ONE STEWARDS is the stewardship arm of the

Diocese of New England, raising funds for items such as charity, scholarships, missions and youth programs. Through the generous freewill offerings of the faithful, contributed through ONE STEWARDS, we are able to fund this great program, Youth Rally, for our Diocesan Youth.

This year the Diocese is raising the Rally attendance fees. The Rally 2009 attendance fee is being raised from \$125.00 to \$175.00 per first child from a family, with the first subsequent child from that same family being charged \$125.00 and any children beyond that being admitted free of charge (i.e., the "family fee" for attendance would be \$300.00 per family). Please note that this is the first increase in the Rally attendance fees in at least five years, though the bus fee has been increased incrementally over the last five years from \$20.00 to the present \$40.00.

In speaking of Rally attendance fees, we should note that Diocesan families are always told that cost should not be an impediment to attendance at Rally and families are asked to let the Rally administrators know if there are any financial issues affecting participation. If a young person is eligible and wants to attend Rally, the Diocese tries to make sure that he or she does so, no matter what the financial concerns.

Helping the youth of the Diocese attend Rally is an extremely important investment, because nurturing the Orthodox Christian faith of our young people is one of our highest priorities. By the grace of God, the Youth Rally is one of the

and the faithful of the parish. At the conclusion of the liturgy, Bishop Nikon presented a Synodal Gramota signed by all the members of the Holy Synod to Protodeacon Simeon Kopcha for his many years of dedicated and faithful service



Christian fellowship is the heart of the Youth Rally experience.

most vibrant and successful ministries in the Diocese and we need your help to maintain this vital ministry for our young people. Please consider sponsoring a young person to attend Rally by making a \$175 donation in support of Youth Rally. Or, if you would like to volunteer to assist at Rally, please contact Fr. John Hopko, Youth Director.

In whatever way you are able to help, keep in mind that it costs nearly \$100.00 a day to have a Rallyer at Rally and Rally is usually five days long. How wonderful it would be to know that you are sponsoring a child to attend Rally! Make a contribution today! If you would like to support the Diocesan Youth Rally, please make out a check to "ONE STEWARDS—Diocese of New England" and send that check to ONE STEWARDS, PO BOX 1182, Torrington, CT 06790. Thank you for your generous support!

***Please sponsor a child to attend Youth Rally 2009!***

## ***Ss. Cyril and Methodius Church, Terryville CT***

Protodeacon Paul Nimchek

His Grace, Bishop Nikon, made a visit to the Terryville parish on Sunday, May 10th, the eve of the Commemoration of the parish's patron saints, Cyril and Methodius. Bishop Nikon celebrated the liturgy with Fr. John Hopko

to the church on the local, diocesan, and national levels. AXIOS to Protodeacon Simeon.

*Terryville to 6*

Terryville from 5

On Lazarus Saturday, April 10th, the parish had a Youth Retreat after the liturgy. The students made Prayer Books for their own use at home in their personal prayers. The students also collected donations for the town Food Pantry. They carried these donations to the food pantry, weighed the donations, and helped stock the shelves.

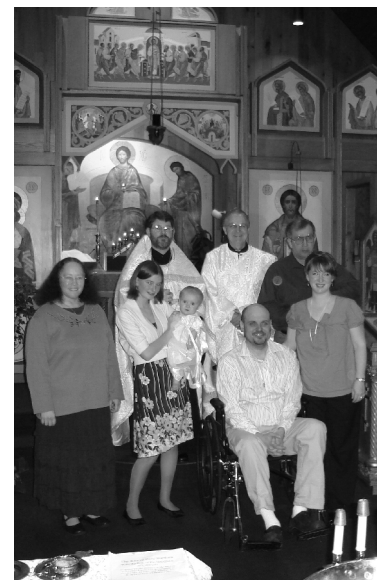
The parish also welcomed some new members to the parish during the past year. Elena and Stephen Granoth were married in our parish last October. In December of 2008, Jerry and Jennifer Wojcik were received into the Orthodox faith and their daughter, Serafina, was baptized. Many Years to the newest members of our parish family.



Protodeacon Simeon Kopcha receives a Synodal Gramota for his many years of faithful service.



Participants of the Youth Retreat



Reception of the Wojcik family into the Orthodox Church.

Reflections from 3

strong one way the other, I would say, "I yield to your intellect and logic." Her intellect was extremely valuable. We knew one another since we were kids, so it was like we were one person. She was more essential to my ministry than words can describe; she supported me, she kept me sane.

ONE: What have been the greatest joys of your priestly ministry?

+NIKON: One of my greatest joys is to spend time with the youth. The exuberance of young people's desire to preach the Gospel is contagious. It re-

news my priesthood. Whether I spend time with the young men and women of the OCF or with younger children, it is a renewal of my own vocation; it gives me hope for the Church and for the future. You can see that the Church is alive and hopeful, and magnificent and mysterious and wonderful. When I serve with young altar servers, I consider them as my partners in serving the Liturgy, and it is a great joy. With all of the other distractions, the fact that they decide to be in church...that speaks volumes. I absolutely love them. I feel young again as well  
ONE: What advice would you give to a young man considering serving as a priest today?

+NIKON: First of all, I'd say to put your future completely in the hands of God; allow Christ to guide you, and He will. Everyone has particular visions and ideas of what God is calling him to, but this very often changes. Christ has plans for you, and He will guide you. I never anticipated being a hierarch. It is Christ who rules and guides the Church, even with all of its flaws. To serve in the Church is to become a tool in the hands of God. A priest is a unique calling to be a minister of the Sacraments and a preacher of the Gospel. That is our calling.  
ONE: Thank you so much for your time and your ministry Your Grace. May God grant you many years! *Eis polla, eti dhespota.*



The newly ordained Fr. Nicholas, Anthony Athanas, Bishop STEPHEN (Lasko)

# *Transfiguration and the Glory of God*

Rev. J. Sergius Halvorsen

In this world glory is unusually measured in wealth, ostentation, influence and fame. "The artist gave a glorious performance." "The hotel is glorious in its stunning architecture and luxuriously appointed rooms." "My favorite team played flawlessly to achieve a glorious victory." More often than not, we think of glory as something reserved for movie stars, elite professional athletes, and the very wealthy. But from this understanding of glory, how can we understand the glory of God as witnessed in the Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

St. Peter tells us, "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 honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" (2 Peter 1:16-7) We know from St. Matthew's account of the Transfiguration that Jesus' face shone like the sun and that his clothes became as white as the light. Now this is glory, the kind that we could imagine in a movie with state-of-the-art special effects. We could even imagine that this kind of glory of God is on par, or maybe even exceeds that of the glorious people and things that we see every day in our cities, on TV and in the movies. And there is something very alluring about this idea of glory. In our minds, we can place the Transfigured Christ side by side with movie stars, and billionaires and politicians, and then we can say to ourselves, "Look, this Jesus with a shining face and radiant garments can hold his own among all of those glorious people. In fact, He's even

more glorious than they are." As if our Lord were the most stunning celebrity to attend some exclusive red-carpet event in Hollywood. Without question, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is more glorious than anyone who has ever lived. However, there is a grave danger in thinking about God's glory in this way.

The reason it is dangerous is because we make the glory of this world the standard by which we evaluate Jesus' divinity. This would be like putting Andre Rublev's icon of the Holy Trinity in an art gallery next to paintings by other famous artists, and comparing them based on their monetary value. "Hmm. Picasso: \$7 million. Rembrandt: \$12 million. Oh, VanGogh: \$16 million. But, hey, look at this. Andre Rublev: \$150 million. Clearly, the icon of the Trinity is the most valuable." Making this kind of comparison completely misses the point. The same holds true if we think of the glory of God in terms of earthly glory. Furthermore, it is important to note that Jesus only allowed three of his disciples to witness his Transfiguration on the top of a lonely mountain. If Jesus had any interest in the glory of this world, then there would have been countless more opportune moments for him to shine with the uncreated light: on Palm Sunday; when He was on trial before the Scribes and Pharisees; in the presence of Pontius Pilate the Roman governor; or perhaps as he was carrying the Cross to Golgotha. But, the fact that the Transfiguration is only witnessed by a few disciples, away from everyone else, tells us that God's glory is completely different than the glory of this world. Make no mistake, God's glory is greater and more impressive than that of this world, but it is also an entirely different kind of glory. God's glory is not like the glory of this world.

In St. John's Gospel, Jesus prays, "O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the

glory which I had with You before the world was." What is about to happen when Jesus prays this prayer? The Crucifixion. Jesus is going to His crucifixion when He prays to His Father that He would be glorified with the glory of God. Does this mean that Crucifixion is glorious? No. Crucifixion is not glorious, it is ugly, hateful, sinful, and evil. Yet, God's glory is perfectly manifested to us in the Crucifixion by how the Son of God responds to evil, sin and death. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ does not respond to evil with evil, he does not respond to suffering by inflicting suffering, he does not fight against death by harming others. Rather, Jesus allows all of the sin, and injustice and evil of the world to descend directly upon Him, and he responds with love, mercy and forgiveness. This is the glory of God! The peace, the hope, the unshakable spiritual strength, and the perfect love that we see in Christ, this is God's glory. The glory of God is not merely shining garments, or stunning visual experiences. It is the cheap, fleeting glory of a red-carpet event. The glory of God is eternal. It Christ, radiating the bright light of God's love in a world darkened by sin and death.

When Peter, James and John descend from the mountain where Christ had been transfigured, Jesus says to them, "Tell this vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead." Clearly, Christ understood that the glory of the Transfiguration was inextricably linked to the glory of the Crucifixion. If the glory of the Transfiguration was not linked to the Crucifixion then why ask the disciples to keep the vision a secret until after the Resurrection? The glory of the Transfiguration, the Glory of God, is the glory of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It is the power of God to take on the form of a slave, allow himself to be powerless before sin and death; and even suffer death in the flesh, and to arise victoriously. This is

*The peace, the hope, the unshakable spiritual strength, and the perfect love that we see in Christ, this is God's glory.*

O. N. E.

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*Transfiguration from 7*

the glory of God, this is the glory of Jesus Christ, and it is our vocation to share in this same glory.

Unlike the glory of this world, which is only available to the wealthy, the powerful, and the famous, the Glory of God—the glory of the Transfigured-Crucified Christ—is available to all of us. It is available to the youngest child, to the oldest senior citizen, and everyone in between. It is available to the rich, the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the shy and the outgoing. It is available to everyone! The glory of God fills us and shines into the world whenever we respond to sin, suffering and death with the faith, hope and love of Jesus Christ.

The glory of God does not make suffering vanish. Christ, the Glorified One, did not endure any less suffering because He was glorified. But as God endures suffering, the suffering is transformed, and this is the fundamental mystery of our Christian faith. God transforms suffering and death into joy and new life. This is the glory of God, and it is infinitely

more glorious than the glory of this world! When we respond to our suffering with faith in Christ, our suffering does not go away, but the suffering is transformed and so are we. No longer is suffering something to be avoided at all costs with bitter white-knuckled determination. In Christ, our suffering becomes our moment for transfiguration, our moment to be transfigured with the glory of Christ.

Just like the Transfiguration of Christ, our transfiguration will most likely be more private than public. When Christ was transfigured on the mountain, only three of his disciples were present, and only slightly more were first hand witnesses to Christ's Resurrection. The glory of God is not something that can be broadcast in Hi-Def, or plastered on a billboard next to the highway. The glory of God is personal, it touches hearts and change lives. In the case of Christ, His glory was witnessed by only a few, yet completely changed the world. Likewise, our transfiguration in the midst of our suffering is

personal, meant to touch the hearts and minds of those few whom God has placed in our lives.

Who are these people? What will they do? How will my Christian witness make a difference? We don't know. But God knows. And in the same way that a handful of Jews from Palestine in the first century witnessed the glory of God in Jesus Christ, two or three New Englanders will be touched by the glory of God as we allow Him to transfigure us. And two or three is all it takes.

Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, celebrating our Lord's Transfiguration is the opportunity for our transfiguration. Whether your suffering is great or whether it is small, it is still suffering, and it is a perfect moment for the love of God to transfigure and transform us. Filled with the joy and love of Christ, our suffering is mysteriously transfigured into an experience of life, and hope. In this mystery, we are forever changed, and through us, God continues to transform the world.