

### From the Fathers

**From a sermon on the transfiguration of the Lord by Anastasius of Sinai, bishop**

***It is good for us to be here***

Since each of us possesses God in his heart and is being transformed into his divine image, we also should cry out with joy: *It is good for us to be here* – here where all things shine with divine radiance, where there is joy and gladness and exultation; where there is nothing in our hearts but peace, serenity and stillness; where God is seen. For here, in our hearts, Christ takes up his abode together with the Father, saying as he enters: *Today salvation has come to this house*. With Christ, our hearts receive all the wealth of his eternal blessings, and there where they are stored up for us in him, we see reflected as in a mirror both the first fruits and the whole of the world to come.

### O Sing unto the Lord

Arguably the oldest form of music, Plainsong dates from the earliest centuries of Christianity. Traditionally sung without musical accompaniment, it is now at times accompanied by organ harmonies. The earliest use of Plainsong was probably for the singing of Psalms, and this was certainly a feature of Jewish worship and remains so to the present day. The rhythm of plainsong is free and based on the words of the text rather than meter as with modern hymn tunes. After the publication of the 1549 Book of Common Prayer, John Merbecke (pronounced 'Marbeck') set the English liturgy to plainsong in *The Booke of Common Praier Noted*. This remained the most common sung setting of the Mass until well into the 20th Century, and is still used in many churches. Plainsong is also still used for many well known hymns, such as 'Sing my tongue the glorious battle', 'Come, Holy Ghost our souls inspire' and 'Creator of the stars of night'.

### Collect for the Transfiguration:

Father in heaven, whose Son Jesus Christ was wonderfully transfigured before chosen witnesses upon the holy mountain, and spoke of the exodus he would accomplish at Jerusalem: give us strength so to hear his voice and bear our cross that in the world to come we may see him as he is; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, now and for ever. Amen.

6<sup>th</sup> August 2023

## The Transfiguration of the Lord



On 6th August the Church celebrates the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, the occasion when the Saviour is changed in his appearance on Mount Tabor and shines with brilliant luminosity before Ss Peter, James, and John, his most intimate disciples. To them he reveals his identity, veiled as it is in the flesh of his humanity – he is the Divine Logos, Word of the Father, God from God, Light from Light as we say in the Creed each week. The Epistle for this feast is II Peter 1:16-19, and this reminds us that the event of the Transfiguration (and of all the other events recorded in the Gospels, for that matter) are not ahistorical or metaphorical, but real and historically rooted in human history. St Peter himself says, 'It was not any cleverly invented myths that we were repeating when we brought you the knowledge of the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Many caricature Christianity as precisely this, invented myths or metaphors. St Peter was already wise to such false accusation. He says explicitly, 'we had seen his majesty for ourselves...when the Sublime Glory itself spoke to him and said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour."' St Peter is here referring to the Transfiguration. He was there. Christ is God.