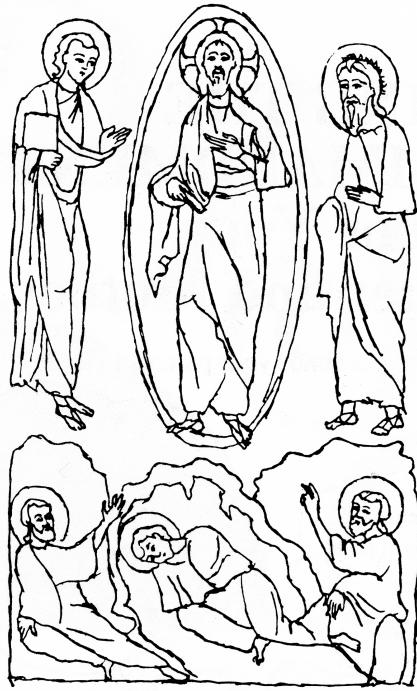


HOLY DAYS AND HOLIDAYS: The Transfiguration

Every summer, when Sunday School is out of session and you might not get to hear a special lesson on it, the Feast of the Transfiguration is celebrated. Transfiguration is a long word but what it means is very simple: something changed.



And, in fact, the story of this major feast of the Church is about the day that Jesus took his dear apostles Peter, James and John up to a mountain to pray. (You can read about it in Matthew 17:1-8.) While they were there, Jesus' face and all His clothing began to shine with a brilliant light and His face was shining as brightly as the sun itself. And as He was changed or was "transfigured" this way, there appeared next to him the figures of Moses (the great patriarch) and that of Elijah (the great prophet).

All of a sudden, a voice was heard from a bright cloud that hung over them, saying: "This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him." (Do you remember when God said that once before? At Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan.)

The apostles fell to the ground with fear. But Jesus told them not to be afraid and when He helped them up, they saw that He was standing alone again.

In Armenian, this great feast of the Church is called *Ayl-a-ger-boo-tiun*. It is often called *Var-ta-var*, which is the name of a feast Armenians used to celebrate before they became Christians. On that occasion, they would decorate the temple of the goddess Astghig with roses and throw water on one another. St. Gregory the Illuminator (Soorp Krikor Loosavorich) replaced the old feast with the new Church celebration of Jesus' Transfiguration. It's usually celebrated during the month of July.

Next summer, make a point of attending church on that Feast Day with your whole family!

