

KOODHOSH EETHO (SANCTIFICATION) SUNDAY **(NOVEMBER 5TH 2006)**

Dearly beloved:

Next Sunday, November 5th is Koodhosh Eetho or Sanctification Sunday. The first period of our liturgical year begins at the end of October or at the beginning of November, on the Sunday between October 30th and November 5th. It is the beginning of the Orthodox Church calendar. This Sunday is called Koodhosh-Eetho Sunday. It means to “sanctify or purify the church. All major religions celebrate this day of purification; for example, the Jews are call this day “Hanukkah” to commemorating the purification of the Jewish temple. Just like purifying the church, we have to purify and dedicate our families and ourselves.

In today’s Holy Gospel reading, Jesus tests his disciples with a crucial question: Who do men say that I am and who do you say that I am? He was widely recognized in Israel as a mighty man of God, even being compared with the greatest of the prophets, John the Baptist, Elijah, and Jeremiah. Peter quickly exclaimed that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Through faith, Peter grasped who Jesus truly was. He was the first apostle to recognize Jesus as the Messiah and Christ and the only begotten Son of God. Jesus plays on Peter’s name, which is the same word for ‘rock’ in both Aramaic and Greek. To call someone a rock is one of the greatest of compliments.

The ancient rabbis had a saying that when God saw Abraham, he exclaimed: “I have discovered a rock to found the world upon”. Through Abraham God established a nation for himself. Through faith, Peter grasped who Jesus truly was. In I Peter 2:5 describes that the church as spiritual house with each member joined together as living stones. Faith in Jesus Christ makes us into rocks or spiritual stones. The Lord Jesus Christ tests each of us personally with the same question: Who do you say that I am?

“Lord Jesus, we profess and believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. You are our Lord and our Saviour and make our faith strong like Peter’s faith”.

Please read the following Bible verses, in preparation for this Sunday's commemoration.

Bible readings for Sunday, November 5th 2006.

(Koodhosh-Eetho Sunday)

Before Holy Qurbana:

Exodus	-	33: 7-11
Exodus	-	40: 17-38
Isaiah	-	6: 1-8

Holy Qurbana

General Epistles:	I Peter	-	2: 1-12
Epistles of St. Paul:	I Corinthians	-	3: 16-17; 6: 15-20
Holy Gospel:	St. Matthew	-	16: 13-23

With prayers,
Thomas Alex