

Scripture Study

Transfiguration of the Lord – Cycle A



Opening prayer

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

(Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 9)

2 Peter 1:16-19

Matthew 17:1-9

Overview of the Gospel:

- Six days after Peter has professed his faith in Jesus as the Son of God (Matthew 16:18) and just after Jesus has predicted his Passion, he takes Peter, James and John to the top of Mt. Tabor. There he is transfigured in appearance, revealing for an instant the heavenly glory that he always possesses, but is veiled in his humanity.
- As elsewhere in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus' experience parallels that of Moses as related in the Book of Exodus: both go up a mountain on the seventh day (Exodus 24:13, 15, 16); both take three companions (Exodus 24:1); both events involve God speaking through a heavenly voice (Exodus 24:16); both involve the glory cloud (*shekinah*) of God's presence, and both of their faces shine with God's glory (Exodus 34:29; CCC 697).
- By his transfiguration, Jesus confirms that he is the Son of God and strengthens the faith of his disciples after the prediction of his Passion (Matthew 16:21-26). Not only is the Transfiguration a foreshadowing of Christ's glory, but also a promise of ours (Romans 8:16-17).

Questions:

- For the first reading, read §§ 697 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. With what are "clouds" associated in the biblical world, especially in regards to divinity? Why, as at the Transfiguration, would the Apostles be afraid when the cloud surrounds them?
- In the second reading, what event does Peter testify to? On what grounds does he stand by the factual basis of his testimony? What ensures that Christianity is a historically based religion?
- In the Gospel reading, it's been six days since Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ and Jesus predicted his own death. Why is that information important for what happens next? Who does Jesus invite as witnesses? Why only three (Deuteronomy 19:5)? Why these three (Mark 5:37, 14:33; Galatians 2:9)? What was inappropriate about Peter's response to this event?
- Why did Moses and Elijah appear? Whom do they represent (Matthew 5:17, 7:12)?
- What is significant in what the voice from the cloud says about Jesus (see Exodus 24:15)? Why does Jesus silence the disciples afterwards (verse 9)?
- How did you come to know that Jesus was the One above all others that you should listen to? What do you do to obey the command of the Father to listen to his Son? How has God said to you, "This is my beloved son [or daughter], with whom I am well pleased"?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 444, 516, 554, 697

Closing prayer

At his Transfiguration Christ showed his disciples the splendor of his beauty, to which he will shape and color those who are his: 'He will reform our lowliness configured to the body of his glory.' - Saint Thomas Aquinas

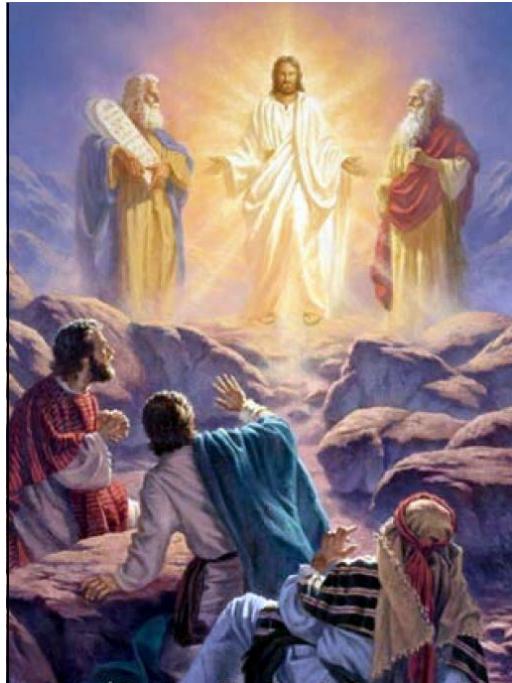
Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings found in the bulletin!

"This is my beloved Son; listen to him."

Gospel: **Matthew 17:1-9**

¹ And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain apart. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light. ³ And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Eli'jah, talking with him. ⁴ And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is well that we are here; if you wish, I will make three booths here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Eli'jah." ⁵ He was still speaking, when lo, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces, and were filled with awe. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." ⁸ And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. ⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of man is raised from the dead."

Meditation: Are you prepared to see God's glory? God is eager to share his glory with us! We get a glimpse of this when the disciples see Jesus transfigured in glory on the mountain. Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain



is celebrated in the Eastern and Western churches on August 6. Mark's account tells us that Jesus' garments became glistening, intensely white. When Moses met with God on Mount Sinai the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God (see Exodus 34:29). Paul says that the Israelites could not look at Moses' face because of its brightness (2 Cor. 3:7). In this incident Jesus appeared in glory with Moses, the great lawgiver of Israel, and with Elijah, the greatest of the prophets, in the presence of three of his beloved apostles.

What is the significance of this mysterious appearance? Jesus went to the mountain knowing full well what awaited him in

Jerusalem — his betrayal, rejection and crucifixion. Jesus very likely discussed this momentous decision to go to the cross with Moses and Elijah. God the Father also spoke with Jesus and gave his approval: This is my beloved Son; listen to him. The cloud which overshadowed Jesus and his apostles fulfilled the dream of the Jews that when the Messiah came the cloud of God's presence would fill the temple again (see Exodus 16:10, 19:9, 33:9; 1 Kings 8:10; 2 Maccabees 2:8).

Peter, James, and John were privileged witnesses of the glory of Christ. We, too, as disciples of Christ are called to be witnesses of his glory. We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18). The Lord wants to reveal his glory to us, his beloved disciples. Do you seek his presence with faith and reverence?

"Lord, draw me near to you and let me see your glory. May I never doubt your love and saving help."

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