



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD, CYCLE A

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“...He was transfigured before them; His face shone like the sun and His clothes became white as light.” Matt 17:2

In this Sunday's Gospel of the Transfiguration of the Lord, we, along with Peter, James and John, experience this beautiful, mysterious, strange and awesome transfiguration account. It affords us a glimpse into the mystical realm. This Gospel account gives us the privilege, through Lectio Divina reflection and contemplation, to experience with our interior senses, this astonishing transfiguration reality.

In the previous chapter (Matt 16:22-23), Peter rebuked Jesus, as he attempted to draw Jesus down into the merely mortal realm, *“God forbid it, Lord! This [punishment] must never happen to you.”* But Jesus turned and said to Peter, *“Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”* In today's reading, Jesus turns away from mortal life and leads Peter, James and John upward toward divine things and into God's heavenly dwelling. This exchange points out the subtle struggle between divine and human power, and the ultimate tension between good and evil.

This tension continues to highlight the intertwining of the necessity of Christ's human suffering in the Scandal of the Cross with Christ's divine glory when, *“...His face shone like the sun and His clothes became white as light.”* Matt 17:2 Here on Mount Tabor divine *“uncreated”* light pours forth from Jesus. Yet Jesus is not just pure spirit. At His incarnation, in divine *kenosis*, He *“...emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. ...He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross”* Philippians 2:7-8. This manifests a cognitive dissonance within Peter's psyche: Jesus was human, and Peter in his confusion would protect Him at all costs. Yet the transfiguration was witnessed where he and the other disciples *“...fell prostrate and were very much afraid.”* We, like Peter, must come to regard Jesus' willing death out of Love as the necessary manner for the depths of his life to be fully revealed as man and God. In the words of Peter in our second reading this Sunday, *“...We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty.”*

Following the resurrection, God shines upon us always, radiating the light of Christ. The sacrifice of the cross satisfies God's desire to give of himself fully, and at His transfiguration we get a foretaste of his absolute love and mercy, awaiting its fullness and completion at His Second Coming. Our commissioning as baptized Christians is to carry the Light of Christ, especially to those most in need of His mercy.

“...while we wait for the blessed hope and the coming of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.”

Titus 2:13-14

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother, John,
and led them up a high mountain by themselves.
And he was transfigured before them;
his face shone like the sun
and his clothes became white as light.
And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them,
conversing with him.
Then Peter said to Jesus in reply,
"Lord, it is good that we are here.
If you wish, I will make three tents here,
one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."
While he was still speaking, behold,
a bright cloud cast a shadow over them,
then from the cloud came a voice that said,
"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased;
listen to him."

When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate
and were very much afraid.
But Jesus came and touched them, saying,
"Rise, and do not be afraid."
And when the disciples raised their eyes,
they saw no one else but Jesus alone.

As they were coming down from the mountain,
Jesus charged them,
*"Do not tell the vision to anyone
until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."*

The Gospel of the Lord