

Sunday, August 6, 2017

The Transfiguration of the Lord

Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

Mass Readings:

1st Reading: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

2nd Reading: 2 Peter 1:16-19

Responsorial: Psalm 97:1-2,5-6,9

Gospel: Matthew 17:1-9

He was transfigured before them. (Matthew 17:2)

A radiant Messiah, an out-of-body experience, time-traveling superstars from the past, and talking clouds—the transfiguration is one of the most memorable stories in Scripture. We know this story: Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up the mountain, where he is transfigured right before their eyes.

So often, we approach growing in our faith as something we have to do. We say, “I need to be more kind and generous to people, especially to the poor. I need to get to Mass more often.” To a certain extent, this is true. Growing in faith does require a change in the way we think and act. But that is only part of it.

There is another side to the equation—God’s side. We need his grace. And that grace can move mountains! At the transfiguration, Jesus, the divine Son of God, wanted to give his disciples a glimpse of his glory before he entered into his passion. He wanted to help them grow in their faith, just as he wants to help us.

The mystics of the Church, saints like Bernard of Clairvaux, Catherine of Siena, and Teresa of Ávila, remind us that words fail when we perceive even the slightest glimpse of the glory of God. Just as Peter rattled on excitedly, we can find ourselves reaching for the right words to describe what God’s presence feels like. But that’s okay. Our actions—the witness of our peace and our joy—can speak much louder than our words.

So dwell on this great Mystery of Light today. Imagine the glorified Jesus appearing before you. Let his love, his majesty, and his mercy render you speechless. Let him remind you that your faith is not just a matter of what you have to do. Let him remind you that he is always pouring out divine grace, always revealing his love. And that revelation can soften even the hardest of hearts.

“Jesus, show me your glory.”

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Questions for Reflection or Discussion:

1. The first reading describes Daniel's prophetic vision of Heaven and the throne room of God. It includes a description of "the Ancient One" and "One like the Son of man."
 - Although Daniel's vision is very dramatic and full of symbolism and imagery, in what ways does "the Ancient One" and "One like the Son of man" remind you of God the Father and Jesus Christ?
 - In what ways does reflecting on your future home in Heaven impact how you live each day? Should it have a greater impact? Why or why not?
2. The responsorial psalm also points to the God's heavenly throne, as well as his rule. It begins with these words: "The LORD is king; let the earth rejoice; let the many islands be glad. Clouds and darkness are round about him, justice and judgment are the foundation of his throne." It ends with these words: "The heavens proclaim his justice, and all peoples see his glory. Because you, O LORD, are the Most High over all the earth, exalted far above all gods."
 - Why do you think the response to the Lord in the responsorial psalm is one of rejoicing and exaltation?
 - Is this your response, knowing that Jesus is King and Lord over all the earth? Why or why not?
 - In what way is Jesus also Lord of your life? In what ways is he not?
3. In the Second Reading, Peter recounts his experience of the Transfiguration: "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. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that unique declaration came to him from the majestic glory, 'This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'" The reading ends with these words: "Moreover, we possess the prophetic message that is altogether reliable. You will do well to be attentive to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."
 - What do you think was the impact of the Transfiguration on Peter's life?
 - What do you think Peter means by the "prophetic message that is altogether reliable"?
 - How "attentive to it" are you? What steps can you take to be more attentive?
4. In the story of the Transfiguration in Matthew's Gospel, we hear God the Father speak these words to Peter, James, and John: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."
 - Notice that Matthew's Gospel includes the words "listen to him," which are not in Peter's account in the second reading. What do you think these words add to God the Father's declaration?
 - How do you make yourself available to listen to Jesus each day? What steps can you take to open yourself more to his "voice" throughout the day?
 - Do you believe that God wants to tell you deep within your inner being that you also are a beloved son/daughter of your Heavenly Father?
5. The Gospel reading ends with these words: "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.'"
 - Why do you think Jesus did not want them to tell anyone "until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead"?
6. In the meditation, we hear these words, "Our actions—the witness of our peace and our joy—can speak much louder than our words."
 - Why does sharing our faith with others often require a combination of our words and how we live our lives?
 - Why do you think "the witness of our peace and our joy—can speak much louder than our words"?
7. The meditation ends with these words, "So dwell on this great Mystery of Light today. Imagine the glorified Jesus appearing before you. Let his love, his majesty, and his mercy render you speechless. Let him remind you that your faith is not just a matter of what you have to do. Let him remind you that he is always pouring out divine grace, always revealing his love. And that revelation can soften even the hardest of hearts."
 - What do these words from the meditation mean to you?
8. Take some time now to pray and ask Jesus for the grace and power to receive a glimpse of his glory as the beloved son of his heavenly Father. Use the prayer below from the end of the meditation as the starting point.

"Jesus, show me your glory."

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, who is in partner relations for **The Word Among Us Partners**, (<http://www.waupartners.org/>); a ministry of **The Word Among Us** (www.wau.org) to the military, prisoners, women with crisis pregnancies or who have had abortions, and college students. He is also

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