



Bringing Home the Word

The Transfiguration of the Lord | August 6, 2017

Climbing the Mountain

By Mary Katharine Deeley

From the top of Mount Tabor in Israel, the supposed site of Jesus' transfiguration, visitors can see clearly across the valley to the distant Golan Heights some forty-five miles away. The view takes your breath away. When I was in the valley, I could only see the immediate area, but at the top I was mesmerized by both the distance and the beauty of the land.

Maybe that's why mountains have always been places of prayer, divine unveiling, and why Jesus took Peter, James, and John up to the top of a

mountain to experience this vision of his glory. He wanted them to see more than their daily life and work. He wanted them to see further than they ever thought they could. He wanted them to see the depths of who he was in a new and profound way. It was important that they do this. The transfiguration happens in the midst of Jesus' predictions of his passion and death, before he begins his deliberate journey to Jerusalem. Without an image of the glorified Christ, the apostles might not have had the courage to continue following him.

Like the story of Jesus' temptation in the desert, we also hear this transfiguration account during Lent. Jesus takes the Church and each one of us up the mountain and dares us to see further, better, more deeply than ever before. He challenges us to leave what we know, listen to him, and follow in his footsteps. May we have the courage to accept that challenge. †

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A Word From Pope Francis

By [Jesus'] Transfiguration he invites us to gaze at him. And looking at Jesus purifies our eyes and prepares them for eternal life, for the vision of heaven. Perhaps our eyes are a little sick because we see so many things that are not of Jesus, things that are even against Jesus: worldly things, things that do not benefit the light of the soul. And in this way, this light is slowly extinguished, and without knowing it, we end up in interior darkness, in spiritual darkness, in a darkened faith.

—Homily, second Sunday of Lent, March 16, 2014



Sunday Readings

Deuteronomy 7:9–10, 13–14

[The LORD] will love and bless and multiply you; he will bless the fruit of your womb and the produce of your soil.

2 Peter 1:16–19

"This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

Matthew 17:1–9

And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do you spend enough time in prayer to face your daily activities with serenity?
- Are there days when you would rather stay in prayer than face your earthly commitments?



The Love That Transfigures

By Denis McBride, CSsR

In the story of the transfiguration, we see Jesus become radiant and glow. As he is identified and affirmed by God as “my beloved Son,” something shows through him that was not evident previously. Jesus has had little success in being recognized by others. The neighbors think they know: “This is Joseph’s son, surely.” Others think he is Elijah or one of the ancient prophets returned, while others believe he is the devil’s agent. Peter says he is the Christ. Nobody gets to the real heart of who Jesus is. Soon after he hears all the proposed names he goes up the mountain to pray. With him he takes the inner circle of the apostolic group, Peter, James, and John.

In the experience of prayer it is clear that Jesus is not Elijah. Neither is he Moses, the greatest of the ancient prophets. They appear on the scene to direct our attention to a journey Jesus must make to Jerusalem. Peter makes a suggestion that echoes down through history: If in doubt, build something. But the focus is not on architectural posterity but on who Jesus is: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”

Is it any wonder Jesus is radiant and aglow? He has an answer to his prayer. There is someone who gets his name right, and that someone is his Father. The deepest part of Jesus is called forth. The Father doesn’t just identify Jesus but affirms him in love as his chosen

one, and that transfigures Jesus. That recognition is allied to what Jesus must do: Being who he is means he must take the road to Jerusalem.

The transfiguration enables Jesus to make the most difficult journey of his life—to take the road that goes from Galilee to Golgotha. The Gospel passage tells us that Jesus did not face the knowledge of his forthcoming violent death alone. That lonely knowledge could paralyze anyone. The transfiguration enables Jesus to make that journey to

Jerusalem in the declared love of the Father. The direction that Jesus has to follow will cost him his life: Matthew shows us that Jesus is not just the one who is to suffer but that he is the beloved Son of God. These two go together.

In our own journeys, we can face tough decisions more surely in the knowledge that we are loved and supported. When we hear our name called in love we can face our own road to Jerusalem. The power of that love allows us to face the future, just as its absence makes the future a loveless landscape. It is that love that we celebrate; it helps us to travel hopefully; it enables us to keep on striving until we can rest at last in the love that best knows our name. †

Believing Without Seeing

By Bishop Robert F. Morneau

The transfiguration would not be the last time that Jesus provided evidence of his divinity to his followers. One of the best-loved resurrection stories is that of Jesus appearing to the disciples when Thomas was absent. When told of the Lord’s visitation, Thomas doubted in a big way and boldly asserted that his belief would be contingent upon touching the risen Lord. The day came and, after an initial exchange, Thomas responded: “My Lord and my God.” Then Jesus gave us a glimpse of spiritual blessedness: “Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed” (John 20:29).

The people of Missouri (and far beyond) express a dominant trait of our culture: “Show me.” Doubt and suspicion are not unique to our times or culture.

We all seek evidence and find faith to be problematic. Yet at the core of our following Jesus is that radical conviction that God is with, for, and in us.

This is faith: welcoming God into our hearts, trusting in grace, saying yes to God’s will, giving our assent to God’s word. Faith assures us that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist and that God truly speaks to us in the Bible. †



Lord, you lead and guide me along the way. Increase my faith and trust in you. Amen.


From *Peaceful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*
Rev. Warren J. Savage and
Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

August 7–12

Mon. Weekday:
Nm 11:4b–15 / Mt 14:13–21
Tues. St. Dominic: Nm 12:1–13 /
Mt 14:22–36 or 15:1–2, 10–14
Wed. Weekday:
Nm 13:1–2, 25–14:1, 26–29a,
34–35 / Mt 15:21–28

Thu. St. Lawrence:
2 Cor 9:6–10 / Jn 12:24–26
Fri. St. Clare:
Dt 4:32–40 / Mt 16:24–28
Sat. Weekday:
Dt 6:4–13 / Mt 17:14–20

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