

Fr. Jins' Homily for The Transfiguration of the Lord, August 6, 2023

The common theme of today's readings is metamorphosis or transformation of Christ by God the Father Who sent His Son as our Savior and Redeemer. Today's Gospel describes Christ's Transfiguration and challenges us to revitalize our Faith as true disciples of Christ, just as the passages from Daniel and II Peter were written to strengthen the Faith of their audiences in times of persecution. Through the feast of the Transfiguration, the Church both commemorates the event of the Lord's Transfiguration and shows us the way to our own transfiguration.

The first reading, taken from the Book of Daniel, spreads out before us Daniel's vision of God's glorious Heavenly Court of Judgment. The Transfiguration is a prefiguring of Christ's glorification by God the Father in the Court of Heaven after Jesus' Ascension into Heaven. In the second reading, St. Peter argues, in his Second Letter to the Church, that the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ and the testimony of the Old Testament prophets are the guarantee of the doctrine of Christ's Second Coming. In the Transfiguration account in today's Gospel, Jesus is revealed as a glorious figure, superior to Moses and Elijah. The primary purpose of Jesus' Transfiguration was to allow Jesus to consult his Heavenly Father in order to ascertain His plan for His Son's suffering, death and Resurrection. The secondary aim was to make his chosen disciples aware of Jesus' Divine glory, so that they might discard their worldly ambitions and dreams of a conquering political Messiah and might be strengthened in their time of trial. On the mountain, Jesus is identified by the Heavenly Voice as the Son of God. Thus, the Transfiguration event is a Christophany, that is, a manifestation or revelation of Who Jesus really is. Describing Jesus' Transfiguration, the Gospel gives us a glimpse of the Heavenly glory awaiting those who do God's will by putting their trusting Faith in Him.

The change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus by transubstantiation in the Holy Mass, is the source of our strength. At the shortage of wine during the wedding of Cana, Jesus changed water into wine: one substance became another substance. In each Holy Mass, our offering of bread and wine becomes the Body and Blood of Jesus under the appearances of bread and wine. However, the Mass is not a transfiguration but a transubstantiation, in which bread and wine become the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, alive there, as the risen and glorified Jesus. Hence, just as Jesus' Transfiguration strengthened the Apostles in their time of trial, each Holy Mass should be our source of Heavenly strength against our own temptations and our source for the renewal of our lives during Lent and all year round. In addition, communion with Jesus in prayer and in the Eucharist, should be a source of daily transformation of both our minds and hearts. We must also be transformed by becoming more humble and selfless, sharing love, compassion and forgiveness with others. But in our everyday lives, we often fail to recognize Jesus when he appears to us "transfigured," hidden in someone who is in some kind of need. Jesus will be comforted when we attend to his needs in that person. With the eyes of Faith, we must see Jesus in every one of our brothers and sisters, the children of God whom we come across each day and, by His grace, respond to Him in them with love and service.

Each Sacrament that we receive transforms us. Baptism, for example, transforms us into sons and daughters of God and heirs of heaven. Confirmation makes us the temples of the Holy Spirit. By approaching the Sacrament of Reconciliation when we recognize, repenting, that we

have sinned, God brings us back to the path of holiness. By receiving in faith the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, we are spiritually, and if God wills physically, healed and our sins are forgiven.

The Transfiguration offers us a message of hope and encouragement. In moments of doubt and during feelings of despair, the expectation of our transformation in Heaven helps us to reach out to God and listen to His consoling words: “This is my beloved son/daughter in whom I am well pleased.”

We need these ‘mountain-top’ experiences in our own lives. We can share experiences like those of Peter, James and John when we spend some extra time in prayer. Perhaps we may want to fast for one day, taking only water, thus releasing spiritual energy, which in turn, can lift our thoughts to a higher plane. Such a fast may also help us to remember the starving millions in the world, and make us more willing to help them.