

TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

August 6, 2017 Cycle A

Opening prayer: *God our Father, in the transfigured glory of Christ your Son, you strengthen our faith by confirming the witness of your prophets, and show us the splendor of your own sons and daughters. As we listen to the voice of your Son, help us to become heirs to eternal life with him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

Sharing Life: What are you most and least grateful for this week?

Facilitator reads focus statement: When the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord (August 6) falls on a Sunday, it replaces the Sunday in Ordinary Time. This Sunday's readings focus on the glory of God as seen in Jesus. In the first reading, we behold God's glory through a vision of Daniel speaking to a persecuted people. We celebrate God's glory in the Psalm. Along with the Apostles, we are dazzled as we behold the face of Jesus on Mt. Tabor. We affirm God's glory in the second reading as a promise of the Second Coming.

After proclaiming each of the readings, pause for a moment and then consider reading the commentary.

FIRST READING: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

In the book of Daniel, God is presented as the Lord of human history. This reading is a part of a vision in which the Son of Man, who represents the Kingdom of the holy ones of God, comes down from heaven and is given dominion by the "Ancient One," who represents God. The Son of Man in the passage will later be revealed as a messianic figure.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 97

This is a hymn of praise to God as King.

SECOND READING: 2Peter 1:16-19

Peter, among other things, is combating heretics and scoffers who regard Jesus' Resurrection and Second Coming as empty fantasies conjured up by mere human beings to control the lives of the people. Refuting accusations that the early Christians perpetuated a lie, Peter recalls the Transfiguration experience on Mt. Tabor when he heard God himself speak and affirm Jesus as his beloved and favored Son. Hence, Peter's readers should embrace the message that they have been given about Christ as the true Word of God.

GOSPEL: Matthew 17:1-9

In this indescribable event, Jesus and his three apostles experience the glory of God. They are, as it were, transported into another reality. The references to Jesus' face dazzling as the sun and his clothes radiant as light are reminiscent of Old Testament theophanies (appearances of God). The

presence of Moses and Elijah symbolize "the Law" given to Moses and the prophets. In Jesus, both converge and are brought to fulfillment. The response of the apostles is one of incredible *joy* and *holy terror*. They are so over-awed that they do not want to leave. "Let's build three booths." But they are also overcome with fear.

Theologians tell us that the "*experience of the holy*" can cause us to feel overjoyed and, at the same time, terrified. Sometimes, that which we deeply desire, e.g., intimacy with God or with someone else, frightens us. We are afraid of losing ourselves to another.

The heavenly voice tells the apostles to *listen* to Jesus for he is God's anointed Messiah. In the dark days ahead, this mountaintop experience will sustain both Jesus and the apostles.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What verse spoke to you most and why?
2. In the second reading, Peter is dealing with the challenge of people who look at Christian beliefs as empty fantasies. Do you personally know anyone who believes that Christian beliefs are silly? How might we deal with such people?
3. The Apostles' glimpse of Jesus' glory sustained them in the dark times. What sustains you when life gets tough?

4. How can the use of words transform or deform us or others? To what extent do you try to affirm others?

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Name one way you can act on today's Scriptures. Suggestion: Be on the alert for glimpses of God's glory in nature and in the events and encounters of daily life.

CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF PETITION AND INTERCESSION ©