

Sunday 2nd (A) of Lent

Gospel text (Mt 17,1-9): Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain where they were alone. Jesus' appearance was changed before them: his face shone like the sun and his clothes became bright as light. Just then Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Jesus. Peter spoke and said to Jesus, «Master, it is good that we are here. If you so wish, I will make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah».

Peter was still speaking when a bright cloud covered them in its shadow, and a voice from the cloud said, «This is my Son, the Beloved, my Chosen One. Listen to him». On hearing the voice, the disciples fell to the ground, full of fear. But Jesus came, touched them and said, «Stand up, do not be afraid». When they raised their eyes, they no longer saw anyone except Jesus. And as they came down the mountain, Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone what they had just seen, until the Son of Man be raised from the dead.

«Jesus' appearance was changed before them»

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Today on our journey to Easter Time, the liturgy of the word shows us the transfiguration of Jesus Christ. Although there is in our calendar a liturgical day, especially for this celebration (August 6th), we are now invited to contemplate the very same scene intimately linked to the Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Lord.

The Passion of Jesus was indeed getting close and six days before his ascent to Mount Tabor, He clearly announced it: He had told them that «he must go to

Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised» (Mt 16:21).

But the disciples were not yet ready to see the suffering of their Lord and Master. He, who had always been merciful towards the defenseless, who had healed many a skin marred by leprosy, who had given light to so many blind eyes, who had given back motion to so many paralyzed limbs, it could not just be that his body was to be blemished by the thrashing and flogging. And, in spite of everything, He asserts without any concessions: «I had to suffer». Incomprehensible! Impossible!

But in despite all this incomprehension, Jesus knows what He has come to this world for. He knows He has to assume all the feebleness and pain overwhelming the humanity to be able to divinize it and, thus, redeem it from the vicious circle of sin and death, so that the latter defeated —death—, it cannot anymore hold man in bondage; man, who God created in his own image.

This is why, the Transfiguration is a splendid icon of our redemption, where the Lord's flesh appears in a glimpse of his resurrection. Thus, if, with the announcement of his Passion He kindled the anguish of the Apostles, with the glow of his divinity He strengthens their hope while anticipating them the Paschal joy, even though, neither Peter, James or John could understand quite well what did it mean... to be raised from the dead (cf. Mt 17:9). They will eventually find it out!