

Second Sunday of Lent (A)

Gospel text (Mt 17:1-9): Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and do not be afraid.” And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone.

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.”

“And he was transfigured before them”

Fr. Jaume GONZÁLEZ i Padrós
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today on our journey to Easter Time, the liturgy of the word shows us the transfiguration of Jesus Christ. Although there is a liturgical day in our calendar reserved 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 greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the 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 just not 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 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 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 kindles 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 nor John could understand very well what means... to be raised from the dead (cf. Mt 17:9). They will eventually find out!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“And in this Transfiguration the foremost object was to remove the offense of the cross from the disciple's heart, and to prevent their faith being disturbed by the humiliation of His voluntary Passion.” (Saint Leo the Great)

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“‘Listen to him’. This invitation from the Father is very important. We, the disciples of Jesus, are called to be people who listen to his voice and take his words seriously.” (Francis)

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“The Gospels report that at two solemn moments, the Baptism and the Transfiguration of Christ, the voice of the Father designates Jesus his ‘beloved Son’. Jesus calls himself the ‘only Son of God’, and by this title affirms his eternal pre-existence (Jn 3:16). He asks for faith in ‘the name of the only Son of God’ (Jn 3:18) ...” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 444)