August 6th: Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord (B)

Gospel text (*Mk* 9:2-10): Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother John, and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified. Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; from the cloud came a voice, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.” Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them.

As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant.

«Rabbi, it is good that we are here!»

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Today we celebrate the solemnity of the Transfiguration of the Lord. Mount Tabor, like Mount Sinai, is the place of the proximity to God. It is the prominent space, regarding our daily existence, where we can breathe the pure air of the Creation. It is the place of prayer where we are in the company of the Lord, like Moses and Elijah, who appear with Jesus Transfigured, talking with Him about the Exodus He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem (i.e. his Passover)

“His clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them” (Mk 9:3).This fact symbolizes the purification of the Church. And Peter said to Jesus: "Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." (Mk 9:5)" St. Augustine beautifully mentions that Peter thought of the three shelters because he did not yet know the accord between the Law, the Prophecy and the Gospel.

“Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; from the cloud came a voice, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.” (Mk 9:7). The Transfiguration is not a change in Jesus, but the Revelation of His Divinity.

Peter, James and John, while contemplating the Divinity of the Lord, prepare themselves to confront the scandal of the Cross. The Transfiguration is a foretaste of the Resurrection!

"Rabbi, it is good that we are here!" (Mk 9:5). The Transfiguration reminds us that the joys God sows in our life are not points of arrival, but lights He gives us in our earthly pilgrimage so that "only Jesus" may be our Law, and His Word the guideline, joy and blessing of our existence.

May the Virgin Mary help us to live intensely our moments of encounter with the Lord so that we may joyfully follow Him every day, and may she help us to listen and always follow the Lord Jesus till the Passion and the Cross, in order to share His Glory.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Only Jesus is the true and eternal light” (Saint Ambrose of Milan)
- “On the transfigured face of Jesus a ray of light which he held within shines forth. This same light was to shine on Christ's face on the day of the Resurrection. In this sense, the Transfiguration appears as a foretaste of the Paschal Mystery” (Benedict XVI)
- “On the mountain of the Transfiguration, the Father commands: "Listen to him!" (Mk 9:7) Jesus is the model for the Beatitudes and the norm of the new law: "Love one another as I have loved you." (Jn 15:12) This love implies an effective offering of oneself, after his example” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, N. 459)