

JESUS TRANSFORMED

(LUKE 9:28-36)



Interior of the Transfiguration Church on Mount Tabor in Israel

The episode in today's Gospel, which we usually call the transfiguration of Jesus, marks, in dramatic form, the turning point in Jesus' ministry.

Up to this point, he has been preaching and healing in Galilee: now he begins his journey towards Jerusalem and his destiny. The vision of Jesus in glory, which is granted to his closest male disciples – Peter, James and John – gives them, and ourselves, a glimpse of Jesus' deepest being. We recognise the similarities between this incident and that of Jesus' baptism: the cloud represents the divine presence and the voice of God, which declares Jesus as God's Son, the Chosen One. Just as Jesus' baptism stands at the beginning of his ministry in Galilee, so the vision of Jesus in glory marks the start of his journey towards Jerusalem, his ministry in Judea and the holy city, which leads to his Passion and death on Calvary.

Luke makes connections with the Jewish traditions found in the Hebrew scriptures. The two figures who appear in glory, in conversation with Jesus, are Moses and Elijah. Moses received the Law from God on Mount Sinai and facilitated the Covenant between the Lord and the people of Israel. Elijah represents the prophetic movement within the story of Israel, which challenges the legal system and reminds the clergy and laity of the deeper meaning of the Law: that its purpose is to bring the person and nation into an intimate, personal relationship with, and commitment to, the Lord.

It is this vision, in both senses, which is given to us as we continue our Lenten journey towards Easter. ■

REFLECT

Once in a while, we may have a sense of how life can really be, of the person we would like to be ideally. The story in today's Gospel is something like that: Peter wants to prolong the experience of seeing Jesus in glory, so he proposes constructing shelters for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. Luke observes, perhaps wryly, and maybe affectionately, that "He did not know what he was saying."

Peter is the impulsive character, always speaking before thinking. But perhaps he is more honest than many others: he is not calculating and always getting into trouble. When we read or listen to the Gospels, we are invited to ask ourselves, with whom do I identify? With what character am I most in sympathy? There is no right or wrong answer; we are being invited to enter into the Gospel story and to make it part of ourselves.

Moses and Elijah are talking with Jesus about "his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem". Jesus is about to embark on the journey which will lead him to his destiny. None of us know where life will lead us, or what life has in store for us. Our observance of Lent, however we decide to keep it, is intended to help us reflect more deeply on our relationship with the Lord. Peter wanted to take a shortcut; he was quickly disabused of this notion. ■

DO

Make the sign of the cross: reflect on how this represents Jesus' passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem.



LEARN

The transfiguration of Jesus is the mirror image of the story of his baptism.

Both reveal to the readers of the Gospel Jesus' true identity as the Son of God.

The baptism stands at the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee.

The transfiguration heralds the start of Jesus' journey to Judea and Jerusalem.

SAY

This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him

(Luke 9:35)

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Of you my heart has spoken: Seek his face.
It is your face, O Lord, that I seek;
hide not your face from me.

COLLECT

O God, who have commanded us to listen to your beloved Son, be pleased, we pray, to nourish us inwardly by your word, that, with spiritual sight made pure, we may rejoice to behold your glory. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Genesis 15:5-12. 17-18

A reading from the book of Genesis.

Taking Abram outside the Lord said, "Look up to heaven and count the stars if you can. Such will be your descendants" he told him. Abram put his faith in the Lord, who counted this as making him justified.

"I am the Lord" he said to him "who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldaeans to make you heir to this land." "My Lord, the Lord" Abram replied "how am I to know that I shall inherit it?" He said to him, "Get me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove and a young pigeon." He brought him all these, cut them in half and put half on one side and half facing it on the other; but the birds he did not cut in half. Birds of prey came down on the carcasses but Abram drove them off.

Now as the sun was setting Abram fell into a deep sleep, and terror seized him. When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, there appeared a smoking furnace and a firebrand that went between the halves. That day the Lord made a Covenant with Abram in these terms:

"To your descendants I give this land, from the wadi of Egypt to the Great River."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 26

Response:

The Lord is my light and my help.

1. The Lord is my light and my help; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life; before whom shall I shrink? (R.)
2. O Lord, hear my voice when I call; have mercy and answer.
Of you my heart has spoken:
"Seek his face." (R.)
3. It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; hide not your face.
Dismiss not your servant in anger; you have been my help. (R.)
4. I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living.
Hope in him, hold firm and take heart.
Hope in the Lord! (R.)

SECOND READING Philippians 3:17-4:1

(For shorter form, read between > <)

>A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians.<

My brothers, be united in following my rule of life. Take as your models everybody who is already doing this and study them as you used to study us. I have told you often, and I repeat it today with tears, there are many who are behaving as the enemies of the cross of Christ. They are destined to be lost. They make foods into their god and they are proudest of something they ought to think shameful; the things they think important are earthly things. >For us, our homeland is in heaven, and from heaven comes the saviour we are waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body. He will do that by the same power with which he can subdue the whole universe.

So then, my brothers and dear friends, do not give way but remain faithful in the Lord. I miss you very much, dear friends; you are my joy and my crown.

The word of the Lord. <

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Glory and praise to you, O Christ!
From the bright cloud the Father's voice was heard:**

**"This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him!"
Glory and praise to you, O Christ!**

GOSPEL Luke 9:28-36

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up the mountain to pray. As he prayed, the aspect of his face was changed and his clothing became brilliant as lightning. Suddenly there were two men there talking to him; they were Moses and Elijah appearing in glory, and they were speaking of his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were heavy with sleep, but they kept awake and saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As these were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." – He did not know what he was saying. As he spoke, a cloud came and covered them with shadow; and when they went into the cloud the disciples were afraid. And a voice came from the cloud saying, "This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him". And after the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. The disciples kept silence and, at that time, told no one what they had seen.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

(all bow during the next two lines)

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;**

**he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May this sacrifice, O Lord, we pray, cleanse us of our faults and sanctify your faithful in body and mind for the celebration of the paschal festivities. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased;
listen to him.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

As we receive these glorious mysteries, we make thanksgiving to you, O Lord, for allowing us while still on earth to be partakers even now of the things of heaven. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE

Bless your faithful, we pray, O Lord, with a blessing that endures for ever, and keep them faithful to the Gospel of your Only Begotten Son, so that they may always desire and at last attain that glory whose beauty he showed in his own Body, to the amazement of his Apostles. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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Fasting makes sense if it really chips away at our security and, as a consequence, benefits someone else, if it helps us cultivate the style of the good Samaritan, who bent down to his brother in need and took care of him.

Pope Francis