

# Link to Liturgy



## 2nd Sunday of Lent The Transfiguration of the Lord

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### Lessons and Discussions

#### **Page 6 – The Cross: Hope not Scandal**

*“Rise, and do not be afraid”*

#### **Page 10 – Feelings or Faith**

*“listen to him”*

#### **Page 16 – Sin to Grace**

*“he was transfigured before them”*

#### **Page 20 – Transfiguration**

*“transfigured before them”*

#### **Page 23 – Following Orders**

*“they kept the matters to themselves”*

#### **Page 25 – A Glimpse of Heaven**

*“it is good that we are here”*

**Introit (Entrance Antiphon) Psalm 27 (26):8-9 – Roman Missal**

*The following antiphon should be chanted three times so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred.*

III

**M** Y heart declared to you: \* Your countenance have  
I sought; I shall e-ver seek your countenance, O Lord;  
do not turn your face from me.

**Alternate options:**

- The Glory of These Forty Days
- What Wondrous Love Is This?
- Marvelous Light (Charlie Hall)
- All in All (Dennis Jernigan)
- Where You Are (Rich Mullins)
- Heart of Worship (Matt Redman)
- Refiner's Fire
- Consume Me
- Big Gulp (Remnant)
- Cool or Holy (Remnant)
- Limitless (Remnant)

**Collect – Roman Missal**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen

O God, who has 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,

- [46] The Church's Year pg. 143
- [47] Phil. 3:21
- [48] The Church's Year pg. 143
- [49] Ex. 40:34-35
- [50] cf. In Conversation with God 12.3
- [51] Ex. 19:9
- [52] John Paul II, Encyclical, Redemptor hominis, 7
- [53] In Conversation with God 12.3
- [54] 2 Pet. 1:17-18
- [55] The Great Paschal Troparion
- [56] St. Francis of Assisi
- [57] Modern Catholic Dictionary pgs. 383-384
- [58] Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 384
- [59] Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 384
- [60] The Way
- [61] Divine Intimacy vol. II pg. 30
- [62] Eucharistic Prayers I
- [63] Divine Intimacy vol. II pg. 30
- [64] Hebrews 5:9
- [65] Divine Intimacy vol. II pg. 30
- [66] Rm. 8:31
- [67] Entrance Antiphon, Ps. 26:8-9
- [68] Fernandez, In Conversation with God 2, 12.3
- [69] Fernandez, In Conversation with God 2, 12.3
- [70] St. Leo the Great, Sermon 51,3
- [71] Divine Intimacy vol. II pg. 30
- [72] St. Bede, Commentary on St. Make, 8, 30:1,3
- [73] cf. 2 Cor. 5:2
- [74] Fernandez, In Conversation with God 2, 12.2
- [75] St. John Chrysostom, Epistle 1 to Theodore, 11

one God, for ever and ever.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen

**Gospel Reading – Matthew 17:1-9 – Roman Missal – Cycle A**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew  
- Glory to you O Lord

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."

The Gospel of the Lord.  
- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

**Gospel Reading – Mark 9:2-10 – Roman Missal – Cycle B**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark  
- Glory to you O Lord

Jesus took Peter, James, and 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 Eli-

jah." 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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

### **Gospel Reading – Luke 9:28B-36 – Roman Missal – Cycle C**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

- Glory to you O Lord

Jesus took Peter, John, and James and went up the mountain to pray. While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions had been overcome by sleep, but becoming fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As they were about to part from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But he did not know what he was saying. While he was still speaking, a cloud came and cast a shadow over them, and they became frightened when they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my chosen Son; listen to him." After the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. They fell silent and did not at that time tell anyone what they had seen.

The Gospel of the Lord.

- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

### **Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent**

From a sermon by Pope Saint Leo the Great

V. Let me praise thee, most holy Virgin.

R. Give me strength against thine enemies.

Let us pray. Grant, O merciful God, defense to our weakness; that we who now celebrate the memory of the holy Mother of God may, by the aid of her intercession, rise again from our sins. Amen

### **“The End” Notes**

[1] Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D; Divine Intimacy; page 310

[2] *The Order of the Mass I*

[3] Catechism of the Catholic Church; 555

[4] Spiritual Reading in this Link to Liturgy Packet

[5] Matthew 17:9

[6] Sirach 7:36

[7] The Penny Catechism; page 370

[8] Liturgy of the Hours; Ordinary; Concluding Prayer of Night Prayer

[9] Pope Benedict XVI

[10] Fr. John Hardon, S.J., Modern Catholic Dictionary; page 257

[11] Matthew 28:20

[12] Matthew 16:18

[13] Spiritual Reading in this Link to Liturgy Packet

[14] Pope Benedict XVI

[15] John 6:68-69

[16] Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity

[17] 2 Timothy 1:13-14

[18] Introit for Ash Wednesday; Wisdom 11:24-25, 27

[19] Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D; Divine Intimacy; page 309

[20] Matthew 4:5-7

[21] John 6:15

[22] Matthew 7:24

[23] *The Order of the Mass I*; Prayer after the Our Father

[24] Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D; Divine Intimacy; page 309

[25] Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D; Divine Intimacy; page 309

[26] Abbot Gueranger, O.S.B.; The Liturgical Year; Book 5 – Lent; page 188

[27] Rite of Marriage in the Roman Catholic Rite

[28] Abbot Gueranger, O.S.B.; The Liturgical Year; Book 5 – Lent; page 189

[29] Saint Louis Marie de Montfort; Preparation for Total Consecration; Day 4

[30] Romans 5:20

[31] Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D; Divine Intimacy; page 310

[32] Matthew 16:16

[33] Matthew 16:17

[34] Abbot Gueranger, O.S.B.; The Liturgical Year; Book 5 – Lent; page 195

[35] Matthew 26:69-75

[36] *The Order of the Mass I*

[37] Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska; Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul; page 1578

[38] Catechism Glossary pg. 901-902

[39] Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 544

[40] The Way of the Cross

[41] The Church's Year pg. 143

[42] CCC 555

[43] Nicene Creed


[44] Saint Leo the Great; The Liturgy of the Hours, Vol. 1, Office of Readings

[45] Malachi 3:2-3

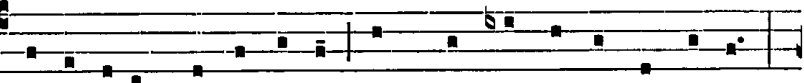
- From a cloud came a voice: "This is my beloved Son, listen to Him."
- Jesus admonishes them not to tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man rises from the dead.
- We too will behold the transfigured Jesus on the Last Day.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen


**Marian Antiphon – Divine Office (Sunday Compline) – Ave Regina Caelorum**

6. 

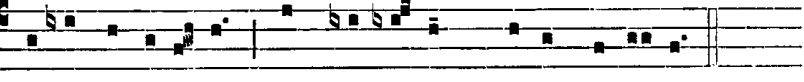
**A** -ve Regína caelórum, \* Ave Dómina Ange-lórum :



Sálve rádix, sálve pórtá, Ex qua mundo lux est órta :



Gáude Vírgo glo-ri- ósa, Su-per ómnes spe-ci- ósa : Vále,



o valde decó-ra, Et pro nó-bis Chrístum exó-ra.

- V. Dignare me laudare te Virgo sacrata.  
R. Da mihi virtutem contra hostes tuos.

**English Translation**

Hail, Queen of Heaven; hail, Mistress of the Angels; hail, root of Jesse; hail, the gate through which the Light rose over the earth.

Rejoice, Virgin most renowned and of unsurpassed beauty.  
Farewell, Lady most comely. Prevail upon Christ to pity us.

The Lord reveals his glory in the presence of chosen witnesses. His body is like that of the rest of mankind, but he makes it shine with such splendor that his face becomes like the sun in glory, and his garments as white as snow. The great reason for this Transfiguration was to remove the scandal of the cross from the hearts of his disciples, and to prevent the humiliation of his voluntary suffering from disturbing the faith of those, who had witnessed the surpassing glory that lay concealed.

With no less forethought he was also providing a firm foundation for the hope of holy Church. The whole body of Christ was to understand the kind of transformation that it would receive as his gift. The members of that body were to look forward to a share in that glory which first blazed out in Christ their head. The Lord had himself spoken of this when he foretold the splendor of his coming; Then the just will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Saint Paul the apostle bore witness to this same truth when he said: I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not to be compared with the future glory that is to be revealed in us. In another place he says: you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, your life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

This marvel of the Transfiguration contains another lesson for the Apostles, to strengthen them and lead them into the fullness of knowledge. Moses and Elijah, the law and the prophets, appeared with the Lord in conversation with him. This was in order to fulfill exactly, through the presence of these five men, the text, which says, "Before two or three witnesses every word is ratified. What word could be more firmly established, more securely based, than the word, which is proclaimed by the trumpets of both Old and New Testaments, sounding in harmony, and by the utterances of ancient prophecy and the teaching of the Gospel, in full agreement with each other?" The writings of the two testaments support each other. The radiance of the Transfiguration reveals clearly and unmistakably the one, who had been promised by signs foretelling him under the veils of mystery. As Saint John says, "The law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. In him the promise made through the shadows of prophecy stands revealed, along with the full meaning of the precepts of the law. He is the one, who teaches the truth of prophecy through his presence, and makes obedience to the commandments possible through grace.

In the preaching of the holy Gospel all should receive a strengthening of their faith. No one should be ashamed of the cross of Christ, through which the world has been redeemed. No one should fear to suffer for the sake of justice; no one should lose confidence in the reward that has been promised. The way to rest is through toil, the way to life is through death. Christ has taken on himself the whole weakness of our lowly human nature. If then we are steadfast in our faith in him and in our love for him, we win the victory that he has won, we receive what he has promised. When it comes to obeying the commandments or enduring adversity, the words uttered by the Father should always echo in our ears: This is my Son, the beloved, in whom I am well pleased; listen to him.

### **Responsory – Office of Readings – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent**

You have come to Jesus, mediator of the new covenant. Do not refuse to hear him.

- If those who refused to listen to him warning them on earth did not escape punishment, much less shall we escape if we will not listen to one who warns from heaven.

Today if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

- If those who refused to listen to him warning them on earth did not escape punishment, much less shall we escape if we will not listen to one who warns from heaven.

### **The Cross: Hope not Scandal – Lesson and Discussion**

*“Rise, and do not be afraid”*

Jesus brings Peter, James and John up a high mountain to teach them a lesson. The lesson is simple, “that it was impossible – for Him as well as for them – to reach the glory of the Transfiguration without passing through suffering.”[1] Jesus does not want the Apostles or us to be paralyzed by fear when we see suffering and the cross, but to instead see the full picture, and to rise and be not afraid. If we think there can be glory without suffering, gain without pain, we are mistaken. The cross does not make sense if it stands alone. When the Christian looks at the cross, we know that what appears to be a loss is a gain. We do not see the cross or resurrection alone, but rather look at one and see the other. We profess this mystery, the mystery of the passion, death and resurrection at each mass. “We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection un-

<http://youtu.be/IQGmFo5epi8>

St. Catherine of Siena was an amazing saint who was caught up in ecstasy. Ecstasy is a vision or encounter with God. The first first Apostles experienced a form of ecstasy and awe in front of Jesus transfigured.

Regardless of length of time, to have a glimpse of Heaven is to give more hope in Christ than anything else. **Why?** Because, “There, all is repose, joy and delight; all serenity and calm, all peace, splendor and light. It is not a light such as we enjoy now, and which, compared with that light, is no more than a lamp placed beside the sun...For there, there is no night, or twilight, heat or cold, or any change in one’s way of being, but a state such as can be understood only by those who are worthy to possess it. There, there is no old age, or sickness, or anything allied to corruption, because it is the place and the home of immortal glory. And above all this the everlasting presence and possession of Christ, of the angels...everyone perpetually of like mind, without any fear of Satan or the snares of the devil or the threats of hell or of death.”[75]

### **Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion Decade of the Rosary – Fourth Luminous Mystery**

*The scriptural Rosary is a way to meditate on the scriptures for each of the mysteries. Pray the Our Father and then, prior to each of the ten Hail Marys, read one of the dashed lines below. If you are in a group, it is good to assign each person (10 people) a different line to read and then lead the first part of the Hail Mary.*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

- Jesus took Peter, James and John up a high mountain to pray.
- Jesus was transfigured before them.
- "His face became as dazzling as the sun, his clothes as radiant as light."
- This was to fortify their faith to withstand the coming tragedy of the Passion.
- Jesus foresaw the 'scandal of the cross,' and prepared them for it by this manifestation of His glory.
- Moses and Elijah (representing the Law and the prophets of the Old Testament) were conversing with Jesus about His passion.
- "Do not think I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets... but to fulfill them."

**How did they see him after the Transfiguration?** They see the “ordinary Jesus”. “They see Jesus they know, who is sometimes hungry, sometimes tired, who tries to make himself understood. They see Jesus without any special manifestations of glory.”[68] Soon they see the same Jesus bloody, beaten, and bruised. For us though, we must seek Jesus in the “ordinary” things of our lives. We must seek Him, “in the midst of our work, in the streets, in the people around us, in our prayer. We have to find Him, when he forgives us in the Sacrament of Penance and, above all, in the Holy Eucharist, where He is truly, really and substantially present. Normally, he does not show himself to us with any special manifestations. Rather, we have to learn to find Our Lord in what is ordinary, every day, and we must flee from the temptation of ever wanting anything extraordinary.”[69]

**Why did God reveal the Transfiguration in the first place?** To show there is a light at the end of a dark tunnel. The darkness of what Jesus had to go through with His Passion and death was only a means to His glorious resurrection. “The principal aim of the Transfiguration was to banish from the disciples’ souls the scandal of the Cross.”[70] “Only the three closest disciples – Peter, James and John – are privileged to witness it, the same ones who would be present later at the agony in Gethsemani, as if to indicate that glory and suffering are two inseparable aspects of the unique mystery of Christ.” [71] Lastly, as St. Bede comments, “in a loving concession allowed Peter, James and John to enjoy for a very short time the contemplation of the happiness that lasts forever, so as to enable them to bear adversity with greater fortitude.”[72]

**How does the Transfiguration relate to us?** This story helps us to understand what we must go through in order to see Jesus in dazzling white. “Man’s existence is a journey towards Heaven, our dwelling place.[73] It is a journey, which is, at times, harsh and laborious because we often have to go against the current of opinion and we will have to struggle against many enemies both inside and outside of ourselves. But God wants to strengthen us with the hope of Heaven, in a special way at the more difficult moments or when the weakness of our condition makes itself more felt.”[74] **What are some of the enemies we struggle with inside and outside of ourselves? How has God strengthen us in times of great temptation?**

**VIDEO – Saint Catherine of Siena – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 3:30**

til you come again.”[2] We know that the passion, death, and resurrection are inherently connected. Just as this was true for Christ, it is true for us. Jesus “reveals that he will have to go by the way of the cross at Jerusalem in order to enter into his glory.”[3] The mysteries of the Transfiguration, resurrection, and ascension give hope in the midst of the mysteries of the passion and crucifixion of our Lord. The crucifixion is a victory and the cross a permanent sign of that victory. It brings hope, not scandal and despair. **In what ways has the cross given you and others hope?**

**TV - “Hill of Crosses - Lithuania” POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 14:31 (watch up to 3:50)**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0nX9PGRW64>

The Hill of Crosses is an example of the enduring faith and hope of the Lithuanian Catholics (80% of the population). Although the hill has been destroyed many times, the crosses always reappear. Even when the Communists blocked the road to the pilgrimage site, the people continued their devotion.

**TV - “Remarkable Story of the Ground Zero Cross” POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 5:46**

<http://video.foxnews.com/v/4336233/remarkable-story-of-the-ground-zero-cross>

See and hear the story of the rescue worker that first discovered a perfect cross found at Ground Zero and the hope it brought New Yorkers and the nation following the 9/11 tragedy

There is not scandal in the suffering and cross of Christ but rather hope and victory. “The great reason for this Transfiguration was to remove the scandal of the cross from the hearts of his disciples, and to prevent the humiliation of his voluntary suffering from disturbing the faith of those who had witnessed the surpassing glory that lay concealed.”[4] Jesus gives Peter, James and John a foretaste of the glory of the resurrection so they can endure not only His passion and death, but also eventually their own martyrdom—excepting St. John, all of the Apostles would die as martyrs.

**What did Jesus do to console and give hope to the Apostles and other disciples?** Jesus did not want his beloved disciples to lose faith when they witnessed the horror of the Crucifixion. He wanted them to remember the glory of the Transfiguration. He also says to them, “Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”[5] Although they do not

know at this point what “raised from the dead” means, this event and these words will make sense after they witness His passion, death and resurrection. We have the advantage of seeing the whole picture, passion, death and resurrection, but the disciples did not have this advantage, and probably for this reason, only one of the Apostles, Saint John, remained faithful, following Christ all the way to the Cross and with courage standing at the side of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Mary Magdalene.

**What things disturb our faith? When things disturb our faith, what consolation and hope does Jesus give us?**

**Why is it helpful to keep the end in mind?** Jesus reminds us to always keep the end in mind. The book of Sirach reminds us to remember our death, so that we will not sin. “In all you do, remember the end of your life, and then you will never sin.”[6] We are reminded of our end on Ash Wednesday, when we are told, “Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return.” Blessed Junipero Serra, the apostle of California, said, “Always go forward, never turn back.”

**What are the different kinds of ends?** There are three ends: the end of a current event, the end of our life and our ultimate end, heaven. When we are going through tough times at the current moment, we remind our self that things will get better. The marathon runner is training, and he or she doesn’t just get up and run a marathon in a day. It takes months of preparation, with many sore muscles, blisters, calluses, and pains. This pain doesn’t deter the runner because he knows the end—crossing the finish line—will be worth it. During the marathon, the runner does not think of the mile they are currently running but rather the finish line. The golfer does not think about the middle of the hole he is on, which might include water or sand traps, but rather the green, where he is going.

Remembering that we are mortal and that one day we will die and will be judged, helps us to live a holy life. In the rule of Saint Benedict, we are reminded to “fear the day of judgment and to dread hell.” The Penny Catechism asks, “After your night prayers what should you do?” The answer is, “After my night prayers I should observe due modesty in going to bed; occupy myself with the thoughts of death; and endeavor to compose myself to rest at the foot of the Cross, and give my last thoughts to my crucified Savior.”[7] While this sounds a bit morbid, in actuality it is not. We must remind ourselves that, yes, one day we will die, that we have an end, and place ourselves at the foot of

made. “...yet Abraham obeyed and continued to believe that God would keep his word. Truly he deserves the title of ‘our father in faith’[62].”[63]

**Why must I be obedient to God?** If we think about it, we are obedient to someone or something all the time. Even Jesus, who is God, was obedient. “Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.”[64] **Make a list of the people and things you are obedient to. If we are obedient to these things, how much more should we be obedient to God who is the Supreme Being above everything?** “Men must heed him in order to live according to his teachings, and God himself listens to him because through his sacrifice he will save mankind.”.[65] We should be obedient because we love God; we are not forced. . St. Paul said in the second reading this Sunday, “If God is for us who can be against us?”[66] As long as we are obedient to God, we are with God, who is for us and for our salvation. If we are not obedient, we pit ourselves against God and we will surely lose every time.

#### **VIDEO – Tomb Guards - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 5:25**

<http://youtu.be/2d66vOoexcg>

The oldest active army regiment, the U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, expects perfection in all that they do. They are charged with guarding the tomb of the Unknown Soldier and are extremely obedient to guard their post at every hour of every day, no exceptions. Their obedience is to that of the fallen, nameless soldiers, who are laid to rest, but not forgotten. We should strive in all things to remind ourselves to be obedient to God and to remember the sacrifice He made for us on the Cross.

#### **A Glimpse of Heaven – Lesson and Discussion**

*“it is good that we are here”*

The Entrance Antiphon for this Sunday is “My heart says to thee, ‘Thy face, Lord, do I seek. Hide not thy face from me.’”[67] Jesus in the Transfiguration shows the brilliant face of the Son of God to the three Apostles. The three of them saw a glimpse of Heaven.

**Why does Jesus show it to them for only a second?** Jesus wanted to show them a view of great glory and hope even for just a moment. It was to give them hope of heaven.



Without the Resurrection there is only death. There are those who do not understand death and fear death. “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!”[55] We as Christians are not to fear death. “All praise be yours, my Lord, for our Sister Physical Death from whose embrace no mortal can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Happy are those she finds doing your most holy will! The second death can do no harm to them.”[56]

**What is obedience?** “The moral virtue that inclines the will to comply with the will of another who has the right to command. Material obedience is merely to carry out the physical action commanded; formal obedience is to perform an action precisely because it is commanded by a legitimate superior.”[57]

**[See Link to Liturgy Lesson - To Obey is to do Your Will]**

**How much am I suppose to be obedient?** “The extent of obedience is as wide as the authority of the person who commands. Thus obedience to God is without limit whereas obedience to human beings is limited by higher laws that must not be transgressed, and by the competency or authority of the one who gives the orders.”[58]

**How is Obedience a Virtue?** “As a virtue, it is pleasing to God because it means the sacrifice of one’s will out of love for God.”[59] Obedience stems from Piety, a gift of the Holy Spirit.

**What is Piety?** Piety makes us love God as a Father and obey Him because we love Him. This helps us to have reverence and to pray well. We practice piety every time we put the love of God and wanting to do His will before ours. Many times we speak of piety in reference to the Liturgy. It is in the liturgy and prayer that many times our love of God is most challenged. Saint Jose Maria Escriva said, “You say the Mass is long and, I add, because your love is short.”[60]

We see this act of piety and obedience done perfectly in the first reading this Sunday with the story of Abraham. “In obedience to God’s command, Abraham had had the courage, at seventy-five years of age, to give up country and home and customary routine; now in his old age he has carried his obedience even to sacrificing his only son.[61] Remember, Abraham believed Isaac, his son, was the son to bring about the divine promises that were

the Cross under the mercy of God. When we pray Night Prayer, the Church reminds us of our end and implores God’s mercy as we pray “May the all-powerful Lord grant us a restful night and a peaceful death.”[8]

**VIDEO – Steve Jobs’ 2005 Stanford Commencement Address – POP CULTURE CONNECTION 15:05 (start at 9:00)** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UF8uR6Z6KLc>  
Steve Jobs, the icon of Apple, Inc., tells the Stanford graduates three stories. His third story is about death, and how we should live to the fullest so that we can be who God wants us to be.

We also know that death is not the end, but rather the beginning of the eternal life. Ultimately, we keep our eyes fixed on heaven, our final end. In the Transfiguration, Jesus gives his Apostles a glimpse of the glory of heaven. “The disciples experienced during the Transfiguration... ahead of time something that will constitute the happiness of paradise. In general, it is brief experiences that God grants on occasions, especially in anticipation of harsh trials.”[9]

**What are some experiences God has given us to prepare us to endure harsh trials?**

**MOVIE - “Life is Beautiful” POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 2:40**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Y9aKqawdUQ>  
In the movie, *Life is Beautiful*, German Nazis arrest Guido and his son, Joshua, and transfer them to a concentration camp. Protecting his son from the vile truth, Guido tells Joshua that they are just on a big holiday. To keep up Joshua's spirits, he tells him it’s a big game for Joshua, claiming they must obtain 1000 points to win a real tank and leave.

The cross of Christ was such a scandal that only one of the twelve Apostles, Saint John, was present at the Cross. It was not something that any of the Apostles wanted to witness or see. In the midst of horror, we need hope. we need a promise—a way out. In the midst of the great horror of a concentration camp, a father gave hope to his son. He gave his son a goal, a game, a focus. In the end, his son does get the “tank” when the allied forces roll into the camp in a big tank. In the end, he does win. Even though “the game” the dad makes up is not true, the reality is that the Guido gave his son hope and it saved him from despair. **How much more powerful is the promise and hope**

### that God gives us?

The Transfiguration is not only the truth of Christ's glory, but the promise of our future glory. The Transfiguration increases in us the virtue of hope, which "makes a person desire eternal life, which is the heavenly vision of God, and gives us the confidence of receiving the grace necessary to reach heaven." [10]

### What lessons do we learn from the Transfiguration?

1. Jesus wants to strengthen our faith and gives us opportunities to do so. **What are some of the many ways Christ strengthens our Faith?**

2. We should never be ashamed of the Cross. **What are ways people show they are ashamed of the Cross?**

3. We should not fear suffering for the sake of justice. **What does this mean?** When we are rightly punished for something, we should suffer the punishment.

4. We should never lose confidence in the reward that has been promised. Christ promised us the reward of Heaven. He also promised that He will be with us until the end of time [11] and that the gates of hell will not prevail against the Church. [12] We can completely trust in Jesus' words and be confident that he will be faithful.

These four lessons are the heart of the Gospel. "In the preaching of the holy Gospel all should receive a strengthening of their faith. No one should be ashamed of the cross of Christ, through which the world has been redeemed. No one should fear to suffer for the sake of justice; no one should lose confidence in the reward that has been promised. The way to rest is through toil, the way to life is through death." [13]

### Feelings or Faith - Lesson and Discussion

*"listen to him"*

How many times do we or people we know get caught up "in glory"—the glamour, the appearance, special effects—and miss the true meaning of something? Many times we listen to the beat of a song or get caught up in the hype of what is popular, but fail to listen to the words. What is the artist saying? In politics, we can be captivated by the charm and charisma of a politician, but

we must listen to Him. "And God the Father speaks through Jesus Christ in all men of all ages. His voice is heard in every age, in a particular way through the teaching of the Church, who, 'continually seeks ways of bringing this mystery of her Master and Lord to humanity – to the peoples, the nations, the succeeding generation, and every individual human being.' [52]" [53]

**Why doesn't Jesus want others to know about this?** The hour at which the whole world was to know of His glorious Transfiguration had not come yet. He was to be scourged, crowned with thorns, beaten, mocked, spit, yelled, despised, abandoned, and killed before everyone would come to know this event. His Transfiguration only makes sense to us only within the context of Christ's passion and death, so therefore this event couldn't be shared until afterwards. This is similar to Mark's Gospel, in which Jesus tells those who He heals not to tell anyone. Why? His time had not yet come.

### Following Orders - Lesson and Discussion

*"they kept the matters to themselves"*

After the three Apostles had seen the Transfiguration Jesus gave them an order, "not to relate what they had seen to anyone except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead." While they did not fully understand why they had to keep it to themselves until Jesus, they were obedient.

**Why don't the Apostles understand?** Peter, James, and John did not understand what Jesus meant because they did not fully understand His Resurrection. They also did not understand why Jesus would have to be killed. St. Peter took this event to heart and clearly recalls back to it in his letter, "And the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,' we heard this voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain." [54] There are many today that do not believe in the resurrection. Maybe they also don't believe in miracles or the power of God. These people, who do not embrace the reality of the Resurrection, will not understand.

**What makes the Resurrection believable?** The thing that makes the Resurrection believable is that it is so unbelievable. No other religious leader raised them self from the dead. Without the power of God and without faith, this is an unbelievable story.

not to die, but rather to die to self—die to sin. Jesus is the Light which the prophet Malachi spoke of when he said, “But who will endure the day of his coming? And who can stand when he appears? For he is like the refiner’s fire, or like the fuller’s lye. He will sit refining and purifying, and he will purify the sons of Levi, refining them like gold or like silver that they may offer due sacrifice to the Lord.”[45]

**Why did St. Peter want to make tents for them?** Seeing this glorious sighting of Jesus robed in white and perfection, it’s no wonder Peter wanted to stay up there forever to live out his days witnessing it. However, “The delightful sweetness of the apparition in which Jesus made him participator so enraptured him, that he knew not what he said, not considering that glory can be attained only through sufferings, the crown through fight, joy through crosses and affliction.”[46] This is why Jesus tells his disciples to not say anything about this event until He has resurrected. As mentioned in the previous lesson “Sin to Grace”, Peter did not understand the pain it would take to see this joyful vision for all eternity. He wanted to stay up there for as long as he could.

**Why only Peter, James, and John?** Jesus took Peter, James and John to the most intimate times of His life. He knew He could trust them with anything, and He also knew that they would be the backbone of the Church after His death and resurrection. Jesus allowed them to be there “to see the glorious majesty of His divinity; to guard them from doubts when they should afterwards see Him die on Mount Calvary; to encourage the disciples and all the faithful to be patient in all crosses and afflictions, for the bodies of the just at the resurrection will be made like the glorified body of Christ[47].”[48]

**Why did a cloud go over them?** This is not the first time God has used a cloud to overshadow something that is holy. In the Old Testament God had laid a cloud over the ark, the tabernacle in the temple: “Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.”[49] This was to show this place was the holiest of holies and that God was intervening.[50] “And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Lo, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever.’”[51] Flash forward to this Sunday’s Gospel reading; what is the cloud overshadowing? Jesus. God shows both that Jesus is the Son of God and second and that every word Jesus speaks is the Fullness of Truth and

fail to take to heart the words he or she says. In the midst of the applause, the message is blocked. “The Transfiguration is a prayer event; it displays visibly what happens when Jesus talks with his Father.”[14] The purpose of prayer is to communicate, to talk with God and not just to talk, but more importantly, to listen. We, as well as the Apostles, are invited into the conversation in which we hear the voice of the Father say, “Listen to him.”

It is easy to get caught up in feelings, what we see or experience. Peter wanted to stay on the mountain top and continue to see and experience the glory of Christ’s Transfiguration; for this would be much easier than patiently following Jesus daily and listening to his every word. Listening to the Word of God, every word coming from the lips of Christ and passed down to us from the Apostles, is the basis of our faith. Saint Peter would soon remember his own words to the Master, which occurred prior to the Transfiguration: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”[15]

“Don’t you have this passion to listen to him? Sometimes it is so strong, this need to be silent, that one would like to know how to do nothing but remain like Magdalene, that beautiful model for the contemplative soul, at the feet of the Master, eager to hear everything, to penetrate ever deeper into this mystery of Charity that he came to reveal to us.”[16] The Apostles Peter, James and John are eager to stay at the feet of the Transfigured Lord, but it is only Saint John, Saint Mary Magdalene and Our Lady that stay at the feet of the crucified Lord. It is easy to see the glory, but hard to see the shame; easy to meditate on the Glorious mysteries of the rosary, but more difficult sometimes to meditate on the Sorrowful.

The voice of God during the Transfiguration says, “Listen to him.” Jesus wishes to confirm our faith, not our feelings, and He does this primarily through His Words and example. These words and examples have been passed down to us in both Sacred Tradition and Scripture and confirm our faith. “Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus; guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.”[17]

**VIDEO - TWO BY FORTY (2 X 40) DAY 1 of 40, POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 2:20**

[http://youtu.be/L8Vwyr8c\\_eQ](http://youtu.be/L8Vwyr8c_eQ)

There were many, who had strong feelings that Jesus was the Messiah, as they shouted and sang “Hosanna” when Jesus entered Jerusalem. That same support quickly turned to betrayal as the same people shouted a few days later, “Crucify Him; crucify Him!” The palms of Palm Sunday very quickly turn to ash, the same ash we place on our foreheads during Lent to remind us of our betrayal of Christ. The ashes also remind us that although we betrayed Him, His mercy extends to us and He overlooks the sins of men for the sake of repentance. “Your mercy extends to all things, O Lord, and you despise none of the things you have made. You overlook the sins of men for the sake of repentance. You grant them your pardon, because you are the Lord our God.”[18]

**Why is the Transfiguration such a short moment and witnessed by only three Apostles?** Jesus does not want to manipulate us. He wants us to choose Him freely. In a relationship, a woman would not want a man to like her for only her looks or possessions. In the same way, a man does not want to be liked only for his money or status. Relationships are not determined over candlelight dinners, but rather in the reality of every day moments in which the character of a person, the interior, is revealed. Jesus does not want to appeal to our senses or our feelings, but rather to our soul, our faith. The reason that the Transfiguration is so short and only seen by three people is because His desire is not to show off but to “confirm the faith of the Apostles who were shaken by the announcement of His Passion.”[19] This is the same reason that while in the desert for 40 days, Jesus refused to give into the temptation from Satan to jump off the temple in the midst of thousands of people[20] and later on the reason He withdrew to the hills by himself when He perceived that the people were going to make Him a king.[21] Jesus is not interested in appealing to our feelings but rather confirming our faith. Feelings are secondary; Faith is necessarily first.

**Why can Mass, prayer, or other spiritual practices sometimes seem boring?** Once again Jesus is appealing to our faith (our soul) not our feelings (our senses). We should come to the spiritual not because it entertains us, or feeds our senses, but because it nourishes the soul. Our senses are temporal, and feelings of excitement come and go. Jesus is interested not in a

**Why was Jesus’ robe so white?** White represents purity, spotlessness, and without blemish. Jesus is the spotless unblemished lamb to be sacrificed for many for our salvation. The brilliant whiteness is to show there is no darkness or anything lacking in Jesus. As Mark demonstrates in his wording, this white was beyond anything human that we can make by bleaching or other ways on earth. It was *that* spectacular. Jesus shines forth as the light; He is the God “from light to light”[43]. In our Sacraments we also put on a brilliant whiteness. During the Baptismal Rite, when clothed with the white garment, the celebrant says:

“N., you have become a new creation, and have clothed yourself in Christ. See in this white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity. With your family and friends to help you by word and example, bring that dignity unstained into the everlasting life of heaven.” The goal of the Christian is to remember and keep our dignity. “Christian, remember your dignity.”[44] We are to keep our garment white, without stain. In both the Sacraments of Holy Order and Marriage a white garment is used to witness this purity and spotlessness. The priest “puts on Christ” when he puts on the alb. The bride presents herself to her groom as spotless and pure.

**SKIT – Ink Sin**

The main character (preferably a guy, because most of the ink smears will be on the torso / chest area) should wear two white shirts. The seven deadly sins (pride, lust, greed, envy, anger, sloth, gluttony) can be acted out by seven characters. Each of the characters will tempt the main character, who will fall to the temptation. When the main character consents to the sin, a smear of ink (black, red, or any color) will be smeared on the top white shirt. The bottom white shirt remains spotless. After the sins, the main character will be sad, but will go to confession. After confessing to the priest, a person playing Jesus will have the main character rise and will take off the top shirt. The bottom shirt should be tucked in. The bottom shirt will be left and will be spotless to show that through Sacramental Confession we are made clean.

**MOVIE – A Bug’s Life - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 0:17**

<http://youtu.be/TTUQyEr-sg0>

This is a short clip in which a fly is so entranced with the light he goes into it. The Apostles were scared of the light and how intense it was, but at the same time they could not look away from it because it was so beautiful. The light of Christ causes us

have been cheated and that it is not fair. We cheat ourselves out of the mercy of Christ when we do not have great trust. The size of our vessel (bowl, cup, bottle cap) is the size of our trust.

### **The Transfiguration - Lesson and Discussion**

*“transfigured before them”*

**What was the Transfiguration?** “The mysterious event in which Jesus, who was seen speaking with Moses and Elijah on the mountain, was transformed in appearance – in the sight of Peter, James and John – as a moment of disclosure of his divine glory.”[38]

**What does the word “transfiguration” mean?** Breaking the word down “trans” means to change and “figura” means figure. [39] The dictionary defines “transfiguration” as a form or figure of something that changes into something that is more beautiful or spiritual. This is exactly what Jesus did showing how much more beautiful He would look after His Resurrection. In meditating on the sixth station of the Way of the Cross, Saint Alphonsus Liguori writes, “My most beloved Jesus, Thy face was beautiful before, but in this journey it has lost all its beauty, and wounds and blood have disfigured it. Alas, my soul also was once beautiful, when it received Thy grace in Baptism; but I have disfigured it since by my sins; Thou alone, my Redeemer, canst restore it to its former beauty. Do this by Thy Passion, O Jesus.”[40] Jesus wants to transfigure souls. Our souls were once transfigured through baptism, and our goal in life is to live out our Baptismal vows, thus not disfigure our souls. The Introit speaks of our desire to “ever seek” the face of God. God shows us His face, in the Christ Child, in the blood, scrapes and cuts of the Passion, and in the glory of the Resurrection. These glimpses of the face of God during our temporal life are a small foretaste of the beauty of gazing upon the face of God for all eternity.

**Why did Moses and Elijah appear?** Moses and Elijah represent the law and the prophets so that “they might testify that Jesus was really the Savior announced by the law and the prophets, and that the law and the prophets received fulfillment in Him. The former was represented by Moses, the latter by Elias.”[41] It was also because “Moses and Elijah had seen God’s glory on the Mountain; the Law and the Prophets had announced the Messiah’s sufferings.”[42]

flighty come and go relationship, but a permanent relationship—a “house built on rock”[22]. In this verse, we are reminded again to “listen to him” as Jesus says, “Everyone then, who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man, who built his house upon rock.” Jesus wants to appeal to our soul, which is eternal. Saint Jose Maria Escriva says, “(Are) You Bored? That is because your senses are awake, while your soul is asleep.” Mass, prayer, and other spiritual practices are meant to wake up and feed our soul. The primary goal is not to captivate our senses, but to captivate our soul.

**Video – Amazing Gift – An Instructional Mass – POP CULTURE CONNECTION 5:18** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ddub2td3m0k>

Fr. Stan Fortuna is a Catholic Priest, songwriter, rapper, and brother of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. He explains how many of us don’t know what we should be doing or thinking in Mass, which makes it easy to become bored. Fr. Stan once said, “Mass isn’t boring; you’re boring!” What he meant by that is if we took your life and had an hour of worship over it, there really isn’t anything super special as compared to Jesus Christ. Also, we wouldn’t want to come again and again for 2,000 years. Lastly, we receive the Body and Blood that gives our souls life!

The world is concerned with keeping our senses awake, to attract us, and in many times manipulate us. When our senses are captivated, we often choose what they want us to choose. Think of a casino, with its windowless abyss of loud noises, lights, and action. The senses are captivated and, in a sense, caged. Jesus wants us to freely choose Him, so He gives himself, clothed in simple humanity, stripped of His glory so that when we choose Him, there is no manipulation.

### **ACTIVITY – Silent Contemplation “Listen to Him”**

In a world that bombards our senses with noise, lights, action we realize that to truly “listen to him” we must listen in silence. At Mass we have periods of silence. After the readings and after the Eucharist, these are opportunities to listen in silence. Jesus went into the desert to listen in silence. Listening in silence is a part of Liturgy of the Hours, in which moments of silence take place between Psalms. Silence is especially a part of *lectio divina* (Divine Reading) in which a scripture is read slowly and then meditated on in silence. Take time to reread the Gospel and/or the Spiritual Reading slowly once, have a moment to “listen to him” in silence and then read again. After listening in silence (10

-15 minutes), each person should share the fruits of their Gospel meditation—what they heard in the silence. The Quick Connect is available to do this *lectio divina* activity.

### **When do feelings supercede faith? When does faith supercede feelings?**

#### **VIDEO - “Sunday's Coming - Movie Trailer” POP CULTURE CONNECTION - 3:08**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAWgWZ9lEuI>

Many times the spiritual can begin to mimic the culture and appeal to the senses rather than the soul. The importance of Liturgy (Mass, Rites of the Sacraments, Liturgy of Hours), prayer, and devotion is that it is timeless and does not depend on a time period or fads. The Liturgy is for all times. It is eternal; it appeals to the soul which is eternal, not the senses which are temporal.

**How is the Transfiguration connected to the Mass?** The structure and elements of the Mass are seen at the Transfiguration. In the first part of the Mass on Sundays (the Liturgy of the Word), the first reading is from the Old Testament, represented at the Transfiguration by the appearance of Moses (the Law) and Elijah (the Prophets). After the Old Testament reading, we have a Psalm and then an Epistle. The Epistles were written by the Apostles, which are represented by Peter, James and John at the Transfiguration. We then stand and hear the Gospel proclaimed. The Gospel is about Jesus, who at the Transfiguration is at the center of Moses and Elijah (Old Testament). The priest or deacon incenses the Gospel prior to proclaiming the Word of God. In the Gospel we read, “From the cloud came a voice that said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.’” At the Mass the incense creates a kind of cloud, and from this “cloud” God tells us to listen to the Word of God. Everything points to Jesus, who at the Transfiguration is flanked by the Old Testament (Moses and Elijah) and bowed down to by the Epistles (Peter, James and John). As we move into the second part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, we center upon the Crucifixion (suffering) and the Resurrection (hope). The prayer immediately after the “Our Father” shows that we will have deliverance in time of suffering and that we can look with hope to the glory of Christ. “Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. For

not ready for the physical path down the mountain, and he was also not ready for the spiritual path down the mountain, which would end with Peter denying Christ three times.

### **When are Christ and His Church robbed of their glory? How does that affect our Faith?**

Peter, who was the first to boldly step out of the crowd to profess Jesus as Lord, now under temptation and test is the first to deny him saying, “I do not know the man.”[35] Under the scandal of the Passion, the glory of the Transfiguration fades. Peter is like the prodigal son, who was given the sight of the glory of the Transfiguration but then squanders it. But, also, like the prodigal son, Peter is quick to throw himself at the feet of the Master and depend on His mercy. It is this trust in the mercy of Jesus, who once again confirms the faith of Peter, a faith in which Peter rightly regains his name, Rock. It is only faith that can sustain us through the weakness of our humanity; that which professes Christ, is confirmed by Christ, and who witnesses His glory but then denies Him in our thoughts, words and actions. It is only faith that humbles us to receive his mercy and trust in Him, knowing that we are “not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”[36] It is Jesus’ desire that we run to Him and fall into His loving arms, for He said, “I desire that these souls distinguish themselves by boundless trust in My mercy. I myself will attend to the sanctification of such souls. I will provide them with everything they will need to attain sanctity. The graces of My mercy are drawn by means of one vessel only – and that is – trust. The more a soul trusts, the more it will receive. Souls that trust boundlessly are a great comfort to Me, because I pour all the treasures of My graces into them. I rejoice that they ask for much, because it is my desire to give much, very much. On the other hand, I am sad when souls ask for little, when they narrow their hearts.”[37]

#### **Activity – Big Gulp; Small Size**

Place a bucket of water in the middle of the meeting area or outside. Form a few teams and give each team a bucket. Then distribute different size cups, bowls, bottles caps, etc, to each team. One team should have the large containers, one team the medium containers, and the last one the small containers. See which group can empty the water from the center water bucket to their own team’s bucket, only using the vessels they are given. The teams with the smaller vessels will (of course) feel that they

vor, you should meditate how it will be when the light shall be withdrawn.”[29] We have all experienced what Peter, James and John experienced. We go from glory to sorrow, and in the midst of sorrow are tempted to sin. Sin does not have to be the end though, as it was for Judas. We see in the life of Saint Peter an example of moving from glory to sorrow, sorrow to sin, and sin to grace. “Sin has increased but grace has far surpassed it.”[30] Although Peter falls into sin and denies Christ, he does not remain a victim of sin. In his humility we see the power of Grace over sin. “Grace transfigures, sin, on the other hand, darkens and disfigures whoever becomes its victim...grace will transform us “from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18), until one day it will bring us to the Beatific Vision of God in heaven.”[31] In the vision, we will not see a mere glimpse of the glory of God, as the Apostles witnessed in the Transfiguration but will indeed see God face to face, and the glory of the Transfiguration will be perpetual, unending.

#### **MOVIE – Luke Skywalker vs. Darth Vader – POP CULTURE CONNECTION 10:00**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HS1mr2ty8bU>

Both father and son have this internal struggle between good and evil; between the force and the dark side of the force. **Are we fighting for our souls? What things have I struggled but was able to overcome? What sins and temptations do I need to overcome?** The goodness surpasses the dark side. The will to do good is in all of us. We must be willing to tap into it.

Peter confessed with his whole heart, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”[32] Jesus confirmed this statement by saying, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.”[33] This profession would soon be tested as Jesus underwent His passion and death. Peter’s profession of faith crumbles under the test. Peter, James and John “were exposed to a terrible temptation, when they beheld their divine Master robbed of all His majesty; but how easy for them to resist the temptation, thinking of what they had seen [Transfiguration], but a few days before! Instead of that, they lost their courage, and forgot prayer, which would have brought their courage back.”[34]

**Why did he want to build three tents?** Peter didn't want to walk down. This makes the words of God "listen to Him" more profound. Jesus would tell him that they must go down the mountain and go to Calvary; both are great sacrifices. Peter was

the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.”[23]

**Why doesn't Jesus always reveal Himself in glory?** Jesus “wanted to resemble us as much as possible by appearing ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’ (Romans 8:3)”[24] Jesus is the Word made Flesh, and so He wanted to manifest Himself in the flesh, fully human. The human face does not shine like the sun, and human clothes are not white as light, so Jesus shared in humanity in all ways but sin. No human would be able to comprehend the divinity of Christ, if not clothed in humanity. “The three were enraptured by it [the Transfiguration], and yet Jesus had revealed to them only one ray of His glory, for no human creature could have borne the complete vision.”[25] In regards to Divine Revelation, God is kind enough to reveal to us only what is necessary for our Salvation. We do not know everything there is to know about God, but only what we need to know. God is a mystery, which if revealed in its completeness, our human minds could not contain. Saint Augustine tells a story of a time when he was walking on a beach, and he saw a little child putting water from the sea in a hole that he had dug. The boy continued to go back to the sea with a bucket, fill it up, and then dump it in the hole. When Saint Augustine asked the boy what he was doing, the boy said he was going to empty the sea into the hole he had made. Saint Augustine told the boy that was impossible. The boy responded, “Neither can you understand the mysteries of God.” The boy disappeared and Saint Augustine understood the words to be the words of the Christ Child. Imagine taking a water balloon and trying to fill it up with the force of a fire hydrant. They balloon would not be able to take the force and would break. God in His mercy reveals to our human mind and heart only what we are capable of receiving.

**What is the basis of our faith? Do we base our faith on feelings or on seeing Christ in His glory? Would we still believe, even if we don't have a dramatic spiritual experience or spiritual high?** After her death it was revealed that Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta struggled for many years in a time of spiritual dryness. She did not “feel” anything but still remained faithful and joyful in the living of her faith. At the end of her life, Saint Therese of Lisieux began to doubt the existence of God. She did not “feel” God but remained faithful. Our Lord gives the perfect example of faith before feelings, as He prays Psalm 22, while suffering on the Cross. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? You are far from my plea and the cry of my distress. O my

God, I call by day and you give no reply; I call by night and I find no peace.” The psalm ends with words of hope and faith, “And my soul shall live for him, my children serve him. They shall tell of the Lord to generations yet to come, declare his faithfulness to people yet unborn; ‘These things the Lord has done.’” We are these children that serve Him and declare His faithfulness in our lives and especially in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. He was thinking and speaking of us, in the midst of His great agony on the Cross. Upon the Cross it was His soul, first, that lived for God, while His senses were being racked in pain.

### **Sin to Grace - Lesson and Discussion**

*“he was transfigured before them”*

Sin *disfigures*. Grace *transfigures*. Jesus, the head of the Church, gives us a glimpse of the transfiguration that can take place in our life through Grace. The members of the Body (the faithful) will be transfigured as the head of the Body (Christ) was transfigured. This glimpse of the Transfiguration was not meant to be permanent.

“This transfiguration of the Son of Man, this manifestation of His glory, lasted but a few moments: His mission was not on Tabor; it was humiliation and suffering in Jerusalem. He therefore withdrew into Himself the brightness He had allowed to transpire; and when He came to the three apostles, who, on hearing the voice from the cloud, had fallen on their faces with fear, they could see no one save only Jesus. The bright cloud was gone; Moses and Elijah had disappeared. What a favor they have had bestowed upon them! Will they remember what they have seen and heard?”[26]

**What are the differences between the events on the two mountains-- Tabor and Olivet?** At Mount Tabor, Jesus is full of glory; at Mount Olivet, He is full of agony. At Mount Tabor His “face shone like the sun”, and at Mount Olivet, He sweats blood, which stains His face. At Mount Tabor, “His clothes became white as light,” at Mount Olivet, they are soaked with blood. At Mount Tabor, the three Apostles, Peter, James and John are favored witnesses, and at Mount Olivet they are cowardly deserters. The Apostles go from one extreme to the other. Our lives are many times like a rollercoaster in which we rejoice, laugh and scream with joy at the top of the roller coaster, but then a few moments later clutch the seat in fear.

### **What are times in our life when we see God in glory (good times) but then shortly after see Him in sorrow (bad times)?**

In the Rite of Marriage, the husband declares, in the vows, “I do,” when asked, “Do you promise to be true to her in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love her and honor her all the days of your life?”[27] The bride then says the same vow in front of her groom. This vow will be tested, it will be easy to say “I do” in the good times, but the vow will be put to the test often in the bad times. The Church is the Bride of Christ. We must say, “yes” to her daily by living out our baptismal vows. God, in His goodness, gives us both good and bad; in the good we readily say, “yes,” but this “yes” becomes difficult in the bad times. Pope John Paul II said that in order to be on the path of perfection two things are necessary: our “yes” and God’s “grace”. It is this grace that Saint Peter and the other Apostles turn to when they lack courage and say “no”.

Jesus takes Peter, James and John up to Mount Tabor to witness the Transfiguration, and then a short while later to Mount Olivet to witness the Agony in the Garden. “When the supper [Last Supper] was over, He [Jesus] took them to another mount, Mount Olivet, which lies to the east of Jerusalem. Leaving the rest at the entrance of the garden, He advances with Peter, James and John and then says to them: ‘My soul is sorrowful even unto death; stay you here and watch with me.’ (Matthew 26:38) He then retires some little distance from them, and prays to His Eternal Father. The Heart of our Redeemer is weighed down with anguish. When He returns to His three disciples, he is enfeebled by the agony He has suffered, and His garments are saturated with Blood. The apostles are aware that He is sad even unto death, and that the hour is close at hand when He is to be attacked. Are they keeping watch? Are they ready to defend Him? No, they seem to have forgotten Him; they are fast asleep, for their eyes are heavy. Yet a few moments later, and all will have fled from Him; and Peter, the bravest of them all, will be taking his oath that he “never knew the Man.”[28]

In our relationship with Christ, we are given glimpses of the glory of God. Many times these glimpses last but a few moments. Jesus does not allow us to stay in the glory continually, just as He did not stay in the glory, but instead, we must remember to keep the faith. Since we are unable to perpetually experience these moments, we must remember what we saw and heard. “It is good counsel that, when you have conceived the spirit of fer-