

## Reflection for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent

Today we embrace the Second Sunday of Lent and the Gospel reading this Sunday is from the Gospel of Luke; Chapter 9 verses 28 to 36. This reading informs us of an event that happened on Mount Tabor when Jesus takes three of His apostles, Peter, James and John up the mountain. It is on this mountain that Jesus is transfigured before Peter, James and John. Then Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus. A voice from the heavens makes a statement “this is my chosen Son; listen to him.” The word “*transfiguration*” comes from the Latin roots *trans* which means across and *figura* which means form or shape. The word “*transfiguration*” in English signifies a change in form or appearance.

In the Roman Catholic Church since the 9<sup>th</sup> century, we have had the Feast of the Transfiguration of Jesus (August 6). This Feast reminds us of a unique miracle of Jesus that is found in the Gospel readings. What is different and unique with the miracle of the Transfiguration is that it happens to Jesus. Saint Thomas Aquinas considered the Transfiguration to be the greatest miracle found in Sacred Scriptures for it complements the Sacrament of Baptism and shows the perfection of life in Heaven. Also, as followers of Christ all the 7 Sacraments are life changing moments. Each Sacrament including Baptism, for the one who believes, is a moment in which we are changed and transformed by the love of God. The Transfiguration of Christ is a prefiguring and a foreshadowing of what is to come in the Sacraments of the Church.

The event of the Transfiguration is important enough in the life of the Church that this event is mentioned in all three of the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke. Not only does the Church have a Feast of the Transfiguration on August 6<sup>th</sup>, but every year the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent has the Gospel reading of the Transfiguration of Christ taken from one of the Synoptic Gospels. When Pope Saint John Paul II introduced the Luminous Mysteries to the world in 2002, the fourth Luminous Mystery was the Transfiguration. The Church sees the Transfiguration of Christ as an important miracle that shapes the Church and shapes our relationship with Christ. For in all three of the Synoptic Gospels, shortly before the miracle of the Transfiguration, Jesus, foretells of His coming Passion and Resurrection. The miracle on the mountain is first with three of His Apostles and then after His Resurrection is provided to all believers. This miracle provides a message of hope to all who embrace it. In the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, Jesus informs the three Apostles that they are not to tell anyone what has taken place until He rises from the dead. In the Gospel of Luke, the author of the Gospel just mentions that Peter, James, and John did not tell anyone what had happened at that time. This miracle of the Transfiguration is meant to be shared with the whole world, but it is to be shared when we are ready for the message of the miracle.

It is fitting that on the Second Sunday of Lent every year we have this message of the Transfiguration, the glory of God shining through Jesus the Son of God. Just as it is fitting that on the First Sunday of Lent, we have the “*Temptation of Jesus*” no matter if the reading is taken from the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, or Luke. The First and Second Sundays of the Lenten Season have the Gospel Readings of the “*Temptation of Jesus*” and the “*Transfiguration of the Lord*” which lay a foundation, for our journey through the 40 days of Lent to the Celebration of the Paschal Triduum.

On the First Sunday of Lent the “*Temptation of Jesus*” is reminding us of the challenges that we face in this Lenten Season and in our daily lives as we take up our crosses and follow in the footsteps of Christ. Also, this Sunday the Gospel reading is reminding us that Jesus shows us the way that we all need to do follow, which trusting and relying on God. The Gospel reading of the First Sunday of Lent, is followed by the Gospel Reading of the Second Sunday of Lent, the “*Transfiguration of the Lord*.” This reading with Jesus on Mount Tabor with Peter, James and John reminds us of the power and glory of God. The Transfiguration reminds us that the grace filled encounters that we have with God in our lives will strengthen and sustain us throughout our lives. These grace filled moments can be Sacraments that we receive, or they can be moments of deep prayer. In closing the “*Temptation of Jesus*” and the “*Transfiguration of the Lord*”, both have an important message for us in the 40 days of Lent and in our journey of faith.