

## Reading for the Transfiguration of the Lord

Saturday 6th August 2022

### 1st Reading: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

*Daniel sees the Almighty One conferring power upon the Son of Man*

As I watched, thrones were set in place, and an Ancient One took his throne, his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and flowed out from his presence. A thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him. The court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.

As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him. To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed.

### Responsorial: from Psalm 97

*R./: The Lord is king, the Most High over all the earth*

The Lord is king; let the earth rejoice;  
let the many islands be glad.  
Clouds and darkness are round about him,  
justice and judgment are the foundation of his throne. (R./)

The mountains melt like wax before the Lord,  
before the Lord of all the earth.  
The heavens proclaim his justice,  
all peoples see his glory. (R./)

For you indeed are the Lord,  
most high over all the earth,  
exalted far above all gods. (R./)

### 2nd Reading: 2 Peter 1:16-19

*The power of Jesus Christ is a truth personally experienced in his company*

We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honour and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain. So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

## **(C) Luke 9:28-36**

*While he was praying, the appearance of his face changed*

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" – not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

### **Short reflection on the readings for today**

Sometimes we can work beside someone without really getting to know the person; then, one day, something happens which causes him to open up, to begin to let us get close to him, and we discover a depth of riches which we didn't know existed. This morning's gospel is about an experience analogous to that, where Peter, James and John are able for a moment to see who Jesus really is. For the three apostles, it is an experience of something beyond words: frightening and yet, at the same time, so wonderful that they would wish to prolong it by building three tents – for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. Reflecting on the experience, years later, Peter would write: "We had seen his majesty for ourselves. He was honoured and glorified by God the Father, when the Sublime Glory itself spoke to him" (1 Pet 1:17.)

The gospel mentions the whiteness of Jesus's clothes; Mark says they became "dazzlingly white, whiter than any earthly bleacher could make them." Saint Gregory Nazianzen tells us that this whiteness was the Divinity, manifested to the disciples. Traditionally, Moses and Elijah are seen as representing the Law and the Prophets, an interpretation which we find in the preface of today's, Mass. But Moses and Elijah were also people who had encounters with the Divinity. Both had to cross the desert, fast for forty days, and climb the mountain of God. Moses had prayed to God, "Show me your glory." When God revealed his back (not his face) to Moses, he placed him in the cleft of the rock, and when he came to Elijah as a gentle breeze, it was at the mouth of the cave. Perhaps these two are present as representing all those who desire to see God's glory: "When can I enter and see the face of God?" (Is. 42:2) What were Moses and Elijah talking about with Jesus? Luke says they were "speaking of his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem" (Lk 9:31), and indeed it was in his Passion that the face of God was to be revealed, as John would later write: "No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart, who has made him known" (Jn 1:18.)

In the Transfiguration, the Father's voice is heard saying, "This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him." Just as at the Baptism of Jesus, so also at the Transfiguration, the heavens are opened and we receive a glimpse of the inner life of the Trinity. Jesus is revealed as Son of the Father, who speaks from the cloud of Divine Presence, where in dwells the Spirit.

The three apostles who would see Jesus in agony in Gethsemane were given this glimpse of who he really is, to strengthen them for what lay ahead, and also to help them to understand what is revealed in the Passion. John says in the Prologue, "we saw his glory;" is he referring to the Transfiguration or to the Crucifixion, to Tabor or to Calvary? Or is there a sense in which these two mountains are one?