

Reading for the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord

6th August 2026

First reading

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

‘His clothing was white as snow.’

As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgement, and the books were opened.

I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 97(96):1-2. 5-6. 9. R1a, 9b

The Lord is king, most high above all the earth.

The Lord is king, let earth rejoice; let the many islands be glad.

Cloud and darkness surround him; justice and right are the foundation of his throne.

The mountains melt like wax before the face of the Lord, before the face of the Lord of all the earth.

The skies proclaim his justice; all peoples see his glory.

For you indeed are the Lord most high above all the earth, exalted far above all gods.

When a Feast of the Lord falls on a weekday, there is no reading after the Psalm and before the Gospel.

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 17:5c

Alleluia, alleluia.

This is my beloved Son,

with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 17:1-9

‘His face shone like the sun.’

At that time: Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.’ He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.’ When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Rise, and have no fear.’ And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one, but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, ‘Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.’

Short reflection on the reading 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.”

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)

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 prostrate 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? Is Tabor simply a preview of Calvary, rather than an antidote: a deeper vision of the reality of the Crucifixion event?