

Dear friends, today's Gospel focuses on the transfiguration of Jesus Christ, and the Church is telling all Christians and Catechumens that **if we overcome sin and temptation, we will be transformed like Jesus Christ into his glory.** As the disciples saw Jesus' divinity revealed, their attitude toward Jesus was transformed, so must we allow ourselves to be transformed. Lent is all about, transforming ourselves and our attitudes so that we can see Jesus more clearly. During this season of Lent, we examine our lives to see where we stand before God. Also, we can see this call to transformation, in St. Paul's writings. According to Paul, Jesus will transform our earthly bodies to be like Jesus' glorified body. So we too hope to enjoy the glory that the three apostles saw when Jesus was transfigured. What we will be in the future is very different to what we are now! Lent is a time to go beyond false images to see who we really are before God. What we will be is what Paul wrote to the Philippians, "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our lowly body to conform to his glorified body..." (Phil 3:20-21).

The transformation theme also appears in the Scripture readings we heard proclaimed today. In the first reading Abram is promised the land by God (Gen 15:18). But when we move to the New Covenant, the emphasis is not on land, instead it is on the kingdom of God. In the second reading from Philippians, we also see a transformation. We are to look beyond the United States and see our citizenship in heaven. Paul wrote, "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body by the power that enables him also to bring all things into subjection to himself" (Phil 3:20-21). Paul also wrote that Jesus will transform our earthly bodies to be like Jesus' glorified body (Phil 3:21).

In the Gospel, God the Father speaks to the three apostles, saying, "This is my Beloved Son, listen to him" (Lk.9:35)! On the mountain, Peter, James and John saw that there was more to Jesus than met the eye. Jesus is true God and true man. Jesus, realizing that his death will demoralize his disciples, forewarns them and strengthens their faith. During the transfiguration, they got a glimpse of the future glory of Jesus' resurrection. Like them, we too get glimpses of the presence of God in our lives. We get glimpses of God in the love we receive from other people. We get glimpses of God when badly needed help suddenly comes to us from out of nowhere. We see glimpses of God when a passage from the Bible or a homily touches our hearts. We get a glimpse of God when we spend time in prayer and experience the loving presence of God in our lives. We get more than just a glimpse of God when we receive the body of Jesus in Holy Communion.

The Transfiguration occurs after Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah and Jesus' prediction about his Passion. After the prediction, there is a discussion of the cost of discipleship in each of these Gospels. The placement of the Transfiguration story close to Peter's confession and Jesus' prediction encourages us to examine the Transfiguration in the larger context of the Paschal Mystery. The Transfiguration occurs on a mountain in the presence of just three of Jesus' disciples—Peter, James and John. These are among the first disciples that Jesus called in Luke's Gospel. Only Luke's Gospel, which often describes Jesus at prayer, indicates that Jesus was praying as his appearance changes to bright white and indeed, all the bodies of the saints shall shine like the sun (Mt.13:43).

After Jesus and the disciples came down the mountain, he ordered them not to tell anyone about his transfiguration, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead (Mk.9:9). Of course, they did not know what he meant. Unknown to them, **the glory of Jesus' transfiguration was preparing them to accept the scandal of the cross.** They would understand this only afterwards when looking back. The good times take us through the bad times. So when our cross is heavy or when we are tempted to despair about the meaning of life, let us look beyond the pain of the present moment and remember those times when we got glimpses of God, those times when God sent us his consolations. Let us look beyond the pain of life and see the presence of God in our world, and the offer of life that God wants to make to all of us. Let us look beyond the deception of happiness that this life offers to the real happiness that God offers us.

Finally, brothers and sisters, as Peter, James and John saw Jesus' divinity revealed and their attitudes to Jesus was transformed, so must we allow ourselves to be transformed by Jesus. In this Lent, let us try to transform ourselves and our attitudes so that we can see Jesus more clearly. Also, let us give God sufficient time to speak to us and transform us, through Bible readings and meditations, so that the Kingdom promised us will be ours. Amen!