

2nd Sunday of Lent, Year A

GOSPEL

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Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone. There in their presence he was transfigured: his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light. Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Lord,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and from the cloud there came a voice which said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.' When they heard this the disciples fell on their faces overcome with fear. But Jesus came up and touched them. 'Stand up,' he said 'do not be afraid.' And when they raised their eyes they saw no one but only Jesus.

As they came down from the mountain Jesus gave them this order, 'Tell no one about the vision until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.'

(Matthew 17:1-9)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- This event is known as 'the transfiguration'.
- Moses was a great figure who represented the law for Israel. Elijah represented the prophets. Readings from the law and the prophets made up the Scriptures of Israel. Here Matthew shows Jesus in conversation with them; thus Jesus is in harmony with everything revealed in Judaism.
- The voice from heaven here echoes the words that were used at the baptism of Jesus.
- Traditionally, this scene of the transfiguration is associated with Mount Tabor, which rises out of the Plain of Esdraelon.

EXPLORING THE WORD

In the later part of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus warns his disciples that he must journey to Jerusalem to suffer and die and to rise again. He begins his journey towards his fate, but that journey is interrupted by this wondrous moment where he is revealed as the glorious Messiah, the beloved Son of God. In the language of this text, there are echoes of the Jewish expectation of the Messiah coming in glory at the end of time. Through the appearance of Moses and Elijah in this scene, Matthew links Jesus intimately with Jewish expectation. The law, represented by Moses, established a covenant with the chosen people, and it was the role of the prophets, represented by Elijah, to constantly remind the people of their covenant obligations. Both the law and the prophets looked forward to God's final intervention in human history, and here, Jesus is presented as that intervention. The disciples want to capture this moment and freeze it in time by building shrines, but Jesus is adamant that the journey must continue to its final outcome, which will confirm God's action in human history. It is not until Christ has been raised that the truth of this vision will be known.

- How do you look forward to your baptism or reception? Will it be a single moment of glory and joy?
- How will you continue the journey after that moment has been experienced?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- How do you expect to be transformed through baptism?
- 'It is wonderful for us to be here.' What does this phrase mean to you at the moment?
- What glimpses of the glory of God do you see in your daily life?
- Have you ever had an experience that caused you to see another person in an entirely different light? Or an experience of seeing attributes in someone that had never been revealed to you before? Share your reflections.
- 'It is wonderful for us to be here.' This week make a special effort to recognise the gifts of each day. Be aware of and rejoice in those small moments of joy or wonder or 'revelation' that often slip by unnoticed. Reflect on these for a time each evening as you review your day.
- Use today's response to the psalm as your prayer this week:

*Lord, let your mercy be on us,
as we place our trust in you.*

