

Homily of the Transfiguration of the Lord Year A, 2023

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14; Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 9; 2 Peter 1:16-19; Matthew 17:1-9

Today, we reflect on and celebrate the Transfiguration of the Lord. The event of the Transfiguration of the Lord is so important that Pope St. John Paul II made the Transfiguration of the Lord the fourth mystery of the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary.

One of the meanings is of “to transfigure” is, to transform the appearance of something to reveal its hidden beauty or magnificence. This was what Jesus did as we have read in today’s gospel: “And he transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light.” Jesus took Peter, James and John to witness his transfiguration, for them to have some idea of who he truly is and be able to tell others what they witnessed. And because the three apostles witnessed the transfiguration, the story of what they witnessed is told till this present day. The glorious nature of Jesus revealed at transfiguration had been hidden from the apostles until the transfiguration.

God made each of us with great beauty and magnificence. After creating the human being, “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). We are part of that beauty. Psalm 139:13-14 confirms that each one of us is wonderfully and beautifully made; but our sins and weaknesses hide our wonder and beauty. Therefore, we are invited to transfigure, that is, to transform, in order that our original beauty and wonder can be revealed.

The call to transfigure is a call to conversion, a call to reconciliation, a call to restoration, and a call to return to originality. It is very striking that Jesus told the frightened Peter, James and John, “Rise, and do not be afraid.” Just as Peter, James and John “fell prostrate and were very much afraid,” that is how all of us have fallen short of God’s glory (Romans 3:23). We are all invited to transfigure and rise.

God speaks to us about Jesus in today’s gospel, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” St. Peter testifies witnessing the transfiguration of Jesus in the second reading. St. Peter calls God’s pronouncement about Jesus a “unique declaration.” He continues, “You will do well to be attentive to it, as to a lamp in a dark place, until day dawns and morning star rises in your hearts” (2 Peter 1:19).

Therefore, if we are to transfigure, we are to take God’s unique declaration to heart, listen attentively to Jesus, his word becomes a lamp in our darkness, our day dawns, and morning star arises in our hearts. Those who listen to Jesus are for him, with him and in him. St. Paul tells us the impact: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Everyone, in one way or another, needs to be transfigured.

A Litany of Transfiguration

May we transfigure from ingratitude to gratitude, amen.

May we transfigure unbelief to faith, amen.

May we transfigure from despair to hope, amen.

May we transfigure from weakness to strength, amen.

May we transfigure from discouragement to encouragement, amen.

May we transfigure from pessimism to optimism, amen.

May we transfigure from godlessness to godliness, amen.

May we transfigure from hate love, amen.

May we transfigure from enmity to friendliness, amen.

May we transfigure from heartlessness to compassion, amen.

May we transfigure from hostility to peace, amen.

May we transfigure from disunity to unity, amen.

May we transfigure from discord to harmony, amen.

May we transfigure from anger to calm, amen.

May we transfigure from meanness to generosity, amen.
May we transfigure from falsehood to truth, amen.
May we transfigure from injustice to justice, amen.
May we transfigure from arrogance to humility, amen.
May we transfigure from disobedience to obedience, amen.
May we transfigure from jealousy and envy to admiration, amen.
May we transfigure from avarice and greed to self-content, amen.
May we transfigure from immorality to goodness, amen.
May we transfigure from laziness to relevance, amen.
May we transfigure from hypocrisy to honesty, amen.
May we transfigure from unforgiveness to forgiveness, amen.
May we transfigure from foolishness to wisdom, amen.
May we transfigure from crosses to crowns, amen.
May we transfigure from losses to profits, amen.
May we transfigure from sorrows to joys, amen.
May we transfigure from fears to courage, amen.
May we transfigure from anxieties to confidence, amen.
May we transfigure from darkness to light, amen.
May we transfigure from guilt and shame to newness and energy, amen.
May we transfigure from bad health to good health, amen.
May we transfigure from poverty to riches, amen.
May we transfigure from failures to successes, amen.
May we transfigure from stagnancy to progress, amen.
May we transfigure from stumbling blocks to stepping stones, amen.
May we transfigure from backward-looking to forward-looking, amen.
May we transfigure from close doors to open doors, amen.
May we transfigure from shortage to abundance, amen.
May we transfigure from bareness to fruitfulness, amen.
May we transfigure from bondage to freedom, amen.
May we transfigure from sin to repentance, amen.
May we transfigure from death to life, amen.

(What else shall we pray to be transfigured from?)

Fr Martin Eke, MSP