

## **The Transfiguration of the Lord**

***Read the opening Prayer and Scripture out loud.***

### **Opening Prayer**

O God, who in the glorious Transfiguration of your Only Begotten Son confirmed the mysteries of faith by the witness of the Fathers and wonderfully prefigured our full adoption to sonship, grant, we pray, to your servants, that, listening to the voice of your beloved Son, we may merit to become co-heirs with him. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. *(Collect for the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord.)*

### **Scripture**

Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother John, and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses and they were conversing with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified. Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; from the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them.

As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant. (Mark 9:2-10)

***Take time for silent reflection, and then read the Introduction out loud.***

### **Introduction**

Like bookends, a theophany, an appearance of God to human beings, occurs at the beginning and near the end of Jesus' public ministry. Jesus begins with his baptism and the Holy Trinity appears: God the Father in the voice approving him; God the Son in the man Jesus; God the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. Another theophany occurs on Mount Tabor before the journey to Jerusalem to face his Passion: God the Father in the voice; God the Son in the man; God the Holy Spirit in the shining cloud. We call this event the Transfiguration of the Lord. His baptism reminds us of our baptism and our share in his life. His Transfiguration reminds us that we will share in his suffering, resurrection and glory in the kingdom of heaven.

***Introduce a speaker or the facilitator can read the following paragraphs with pauses between.***

### **Documentary Tradition**

From the day Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Master “began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things...and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” Peter scorns this prediction, nor do the others understand it any better than he. In this context the mysterious episode of Jesus’ Transfiguration takes place on a high mountain, before three witnesses chosen by himself: Peter, James, and John. Jesus’ face and clothes become dazzling with light, and Moses and Elijah appear, speaking “of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem.” A cloud covers him and a voice from heaven says: “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, #554*)

For a moment Jesus discloses his divine glory, confirming Peter’s confession. He also reveals that he will have to go by the way of the cross at Jerusalem in order to “enter into his glory.” Moses and Elijah had seen God’s glory on the Mountain; the Law and the Prophets had announced the Messiah’s sufferings. Christ’s Passion is the will of the Father: the Son acts as God’s servant; the cloud indicates the presence of the Holy Spirit. “The whole Trinity appeared: the Father in the voice; the Son in the man; the Spirit in the shining cloud.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, #555*)

***The facilitator can read the Discussion Questions out loud for general or small group discussion.***

### **Discussion Questions**

1. How did the Transfiguration help prepare Peter, James and John for the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus?
2. What opportunities does the Holy Trinity give us to strengthen our faith today?
3. How can the Transfiguration of the Lord inspire me in my Serran ministry?

***If time permits invite the small groups to share with the large group any insights that they gain from the group discussion, then read the Closing Reflection.***

## **Closing Reflection**

The preface for the Feast of the Transfiguration, August 6, forty days before the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, September 14, emphasizes the reason for the transfiguration in the presence of Peter, James, and John: "For he revealed his glory in the presence of chosen witnesses and filled with the greatest splendor that bodily form which he shares with all humanity, that the scandal of the Cross might be removed from the hearts of his disciples and that he might show how in the Body of the whole Church is to be fulfilled what so wonderfully shone forth in its Head."

## **Bibliography**

1. Roman Catholic Church. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1992 English 1994.
2. Roman Catholic Church. *The Third Typical Edition of the Roman Missal*.