

GOSPEL*Luke 6:39-45*

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.'

A REFLECTION OF POPE FRANCIS*5 March 2023*

On this Second Sunday of Lent, the Gospel of the Transfiguration is proclaimed. Jesus takes Peter, James and John with him up the mountain and is revealed to them in all his beauty as Son of God (cf. Mt 17:1-9).

Let us pause a moment over this scene and ask ourselves: Of what does this beauty consist? What do the disciples see? A spectacular effect? No, that is not it. They see the light of God's holiness shining on Jesus' face and clothes, the perfect image of the Father. God's majesty, God's beauty is revealed. But God is Love. Therefore, the disciples saw with their eyes the beauty and splendour of divine Love incarnate in Christ. They had a foretaste of paradise. What a surprise for the disciples! They had had the face of Love before their very eyes for a long time without ever being aware of how beautiful it was! Only now do they realize it, and with great joy, with immense joy.

In reality, through this experience, Jesus is forming them, preparing them for an even more important step. Soon after that, in fact, they will have to recognize the same beauty in him when he is placed on the cross and his

face is disfigured. Peter struggles to understand: he would like to stop time, "pause" the scene, stay there and prolong this marvellous experience. But Jesus does not allow it. Indeed, his light cannot be reduced to a "magical moment"! It would thus become something false, artificial, something that would dissolve into the fog of passing sentiment. On the contrary, Christ is the light that orients our journey like the pillar of fire for the people in the desert (cf. Ex 13:21). Jesus' beauty does not alienate his disciples from the reality of life, but gives them the strength to follow him all the way to Jerusalem, all the way to the cross. Christ's beauty is not alienating. It always brings you forward. It does not make you hide. Go forward!

Brothers and sisters, this Gospel traces a path for us too. It teaches us how important it is to remain with Jesus even when it is not easy to understand everything he says and does for us. In fact, it is by staying with him that we learn to recognize on his face the luminous beauty of love he gives us, even when it bears the marks of the cross. And it is in his school that we learn to glimpse the same beauty on the faces of the people who walk beside us every day — family, friends, colleagues who take care of us in the most varied ways. How many bright faces, how many smiles, how many wrinkles, how many tears and scars reveal love around us! Let us learn to recognize them and to fill our hearts with them. And then let us set out in order to bring the light we have received to others as well, through concrete acts of love (cf. 1 Jn 3:18), diving into our daily affairs more generously, loving, serving, and forgiving with greater earnestness and willingness. The contemplation of God's wonders, the contemplation of God's face, of the Lord's face, must move us to the service of others.

We can ask ourselves: Do we know how to recognize the light of God's love in our lives? Do we recognize it with joy and gratitude on the faces of the people who love us? Do we look around us for the signs of this light that fills our heart and opens it to love and service? Or do we prefer the straw fires of idols that alienate us and lead us to withdraw into ourselves? The great light of the Lord and the false, artificial light of idols. Which do I prefer?

May Mary, who kept the light of her Son in her heart even in the darkness of Calvary, accompany us always on the way of love.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/ Homily?



Head: What does the Transfiguration reveal about Jesus that the disciples had not fully understood before?



Heart: Where in your life have you experienced moments of clarity, consolation, or closeness to God — and how do you respond when those moments pass or when the road becomes harder again?



Hands: If you truly see Jesus as he is — not only in glory but also on the road to the cross — what attitude, decision, or way of living might need to change in you right now?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (for example, “Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray”)
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others’ prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the ‘Glory Be.’