

## GOSPEL

*Matthew 17:1–9*

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 BY POPE FRANCIS

*6 August 2017*

This Sunday, the liturgy celebrates the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord. Today’s Gospel passage recounts that the Apostles Peter, James and John were witnesses to this extraordinary event. Jesus took them with him “and led them up a high mountain apart” (Mt 17:1) and, while he prayed, his face changed in appearance, “shone like the sun”, and “his garments became white as light”. Then Moses and Elijah appeared, and began a dialogue with Him. At this point, Peter said to Jesus: “Lord, it is well that we are here; if you wish, I will make three booths here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah” (v. 4). He had not yet finished speaking when a bright cloud enveloped them.

The event of the Lord’s Transfiguration offers us a message of hope — thus shall we be, with Him —: it invites us to encounter Jesus, to be at the service of our brothers and sisters.

The disciples’ ascent up Mount Tabor leads us to reflect on the importance of disengaging from

worldly matters, in order to make a journey toward heaven and to contemplate Jesus. It is a matter of being attentive to the careful and prayerful listening of Christ, the beloved Son of the Father, seeking intimate moments of prayer that allow for the docile and joyful welcoming of the Word of God. In this spiritual ascent, in this disengagement from worldly matters, we are called to rediscover the peaceful and regenerative silence of meditating on the Gospel, on the reading of the Bible, which leads to a destination rich in beauty, splendour and joy. When we meditate in this way, with the Bible in hand, in silence, we begin to feel this interior beauty, this joy that the Word of God engenders in us. In this perspective, the summer season is a providential time to cultivate our task of seeking and encountering the Lord. In this period, students are free of scholastic commitments and many families take their holidays; it is important that in the period of rest and disengagement from daily activities, we can reinforce our strengths of body and soul, by deepening our spiritual journey.

At the end of the stunning experience of the Transfiguration, the disciples came down the mountain (cf. v. 9) with eyes and hearts transfigured by their encounter with the Lord. It is the journey that we too can make. The ever more vibrant rediscovery of Jesus is not the aim in itself, but spurs us to “come down the mountain”, energized by the power of the divine Spirit, so as to decide on new paths of conversion and to constantly witness to charity, as the law of daily life. Transformed by Christ’s presence and by the ardour of his Word, we will be a concrete sign of the invigorating love of God for all our brothers and sisters, especially for those who are suffering, for those who are lonely and neglected, for the sick and for the multitude of men and women who, in different parts of the world, are humiliated by injustice, abuse and violence.

In the Transfiguration, the voice of the heavenly Father is heard saying: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him!” (v. 5). Let us look to Mary, the Virgin of listening, ever ready to welcome and keep in her heart every word of the Divine Son (cf. Lk 2:51).

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May our Mother and the Mother of God help us to be in harmony with the Word of God, so that Christ may become light and lodestar throughout our life. Let us entrust to her the holidays of all, so that they may be peaceful and fruitful, but above all the summer of those who cannot go on holiday due to impediments of age, to reasons of health or of work, to economic restrictions or other problems, so that it may be a time of eased tension, gladdened by the presence of friends and of happy moments.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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



**Head:** What does it mean to you to encounter Jesus?



**Heart:** What “worldly matters” do you find it difficult to disengage from when going to meet with Jesus?



**Hands:** Pope Francis tells us that encounter leads us to “decide on new paths of conversion”. What might this look like in our lives?

## 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 (e.g. “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’.