



The Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord

WHAT IS THIS FEAST ALL ABOUT?

In Year B, the reading for the Transfiguration comes from Mark's gospel. (The Transfiguration also appears in the other two synoptic gospels, Matthew and Luke.) In Mark, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a high mountain, apart from the other apostles and disciples.

There, Jesus is transfigured (changed in form and appearance) and appears in dazzling white clothes. Elijah, the great prophet, and Moses, through whom the Israelites were given the law, appear with Jesus. A cloud appears, overshadowing them, and a voice states, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." Jesus charges the three to not share with anyone what they had seen "except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead." They keep their experience to themselves, pondering what Jesus meant by rising from the dead.

How are we to understand the Transfiguration? The story of the Transfiguration is also proclaimed on the second Sunday of Lent—a key part of Jesus' journey towards the Cross. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* draws parallels between Jesus' Baptism and the Transfiguration. Jesus is baptized at the start of his public



ministry. His baptism proclaims the mystery of our first regeneration—we die and rise again with Christ. The "Transfiguration 'is the sacrament of the second regeneration': our own Resurrection (St. Thomas Aquinas, STh III, 45, 4, ad 2). From now on we share in the Lord's Resurrection through the Spirit who acts in the sacraments of the Body of Christ. The Transfiguration gives us a foretaste of Christ's glorious coming, when he 'will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body (Phil 3:21)'" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 556). During the Prayer after Communion, we pray that God might "transform us into the likeness of your [his] Son, / whose radiant splendor you willed to make manifest / in his glorious Transfiguration." The Collect, or

opening prayer, tells us that the mystery of the Transfiguration "prefigures our full adoption to sonship." The Transfiguration, initially revealed to Peter, James, and John, reveals to all of us a taste of what is yet to come.



The Transfiguration is the fourth of the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary. Spend time praying the luminous mysteries at home today:

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/rosaries/fourth-luminous-mystery-the-transfiguration.cfm>

This article is an original piece writ-ten specifically for Catholic Current.