

SUNDAY PLUS



Only Jesus

A Year of the Word

A glimpse of divinity

by Fr Paul Douthwaite

In today's Gospel encounter, commonly referred to as the transfiguration, three of Jesus' closest apostles are given a glimpse into his divinity and a taste of what eventual glory a follower of Jesus can expect in eternal life.

In the Old Testament times, mountains were traditionally places of revelation, a meeting place between God and man. In physically taking three of his apostles, his inner circle of followers, up a mountain, Jesus was contextualising the experience they were about to witness. This event marked an extremely significant stage in their formation and confirmed for them that the calling they had received from Jesus was truly a divine calling. The vision of a temporarily transfigured Jesus in conversation with Moses and Elijah, whom one can presume

were themselves visible in a permanently transfigured state, must have more than convinced them that Jesus had divine authority. The presence of Moses connected Jesus with the Law, and Elijah with the prophets, the two pillars of the Hebrew scriptures. If these witnesses were not enough, Jesus' authority was further verified by the voice of God naming him as his "Son, the Beloved."

This vision of what eternal glory looked like was short-lived for the disciples and they returned to reality when they were left alone with the earthly Jesus. As a result of this experience they understood that despite the fact that they would experience the suffering of the cross, to be transfigured into eternal life and future glory was their hope as it is ours.

Fr Paul Douthwaite is the National Catholic Chaplain for Prisons for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.



20/20 vision

by Sr Janet Fearnis FMDM

After they had witnessed Jesus' transfiguration, Peter, James and John looked up and saw "only" Jesus, alone and familiar, but they didn't know how or why they had seen the long-dead Moses and Elijah talking to him. Of course they had no idea what to say or do. Would we have done any better if we'd been there on Mount Tabor? Peter tried his best, but did he think afterwards that he could have said or done things differently?

Lent is our journey towards the 20/20 vision of the resurrection. Jesus' disciples experienced the unfolding story of his passion, death and resurrection, muddled along, unprepared in spite

of accompanying Jesus. We have had two thousand years of hindsight to make sense of events which they were unable to see and understand.

Do we make full use of our opportunities? Most of us visit the optician if something is wrong with our physical sight. What could we do to improve our spiritual vision?

Sr Janet Fearnis is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.

Jesus, let me look up and see "only" you. Perhaps life's ups and downs would fall into perspective and it would be easier to sort out my priorities. Help me, Lord, to keep my eyes open to the way you are working in my life. ☪ Amen.

"Only Jesus"

by Max Mathews

Our Gospel reading today describes a wondrous moment: Jesus is transfigured (meaning to "change form" in Greek) so his outward self matches his inner glory. God speaks directly to Peter, James and John, confirming Jesus as his Son.

So what can we learn from this? Firstly, it's a joyful glimpse of the eternal life after death which Jesus' followers will enjoy. But it's also an unusual and worrying sight. Here, Jesus is the only comforting and reassuring presence during a difficult time, telling his followers not to be afraid.

The message is not to be scared when he is around. This event is not meant to cause fear, but instead to inspire fearlessness through faith. Our challenge as followers of Christ is: how can you take that fearlessness forward into both your faith and your everyday lives?

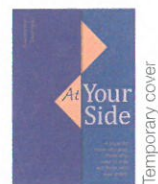
Max Mathews is a young Catholic student of journalism.

"The light is not meant to be kept in the fridge, that is to say, it should not be preserved. The good is today, and if you do not do it today, tomorrow it will not be there. Do not conceal the good for tomorrow."

Pope Francis

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A collection of prayers that are
honest and at times poignant,
they will make you laugh out
loud and bring a tear to your eye.

Today:
Genesis 12:1-4
2 Timothy 1:8-10
Matthew 17:1-9

Monday:
Daniel 9:4-10
Luke 6:36-38

Tuesday:
Isaiah 1:10, 16-20
Matthew 23:1-12

Tuesday (S):
St John Ogilvie (Feast):
Isaiah 50:5-9; 2 Corinthians
1:3-7; John 12:24-26

Wednesday:
Jeremiah 18:18-20
Matthew 20:17-28

Thursday:
Jeremiah 17:5-10
Luke 16:19-31

Friday:
Genesis 37:3-4,
12-13, 17-28
Matthew 21:33-
43, 45-46

Saturday:
Micah 7:14-15, 18-20
Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Next Sunday:
Exodus 17:3-7
Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
John 4:5-42