

## **The Feast of The Transfiguration of the Lord**

Both the Roman and Eastern Rite Catholics celebrate this church feast today, August 6th, on its traditional date for both calendars. For Eastern Christians, this feast is especially significant; it is among the "12 great feasts" of Eastern Catholicism.

Gospel describes Jesus' Transfiguration during prayer on a mountain. The location of the Transfiguration was probably Mount Hermon in North Galilee, near Caesarea Philippi. This feast describes Jesus at the peak or pinnacle of His earthly life when He reveals Himself to three of His closest disciples, by means of a miraculous and supernatural light. While praying, Jesus was transformed into a shining figure clothed with heavenly glory. It was representing the Law and the Prophets, Moses, the great Law-giver, and Elijah, the great prophet, appeared, speaking with Jesus in His glory.

These representatives of the Law and the Prophets, in their lives on earth, foreshadowed Jesus who is the culmination of the Law and the Prophets. Then "a bright Cloud overshadowed them, and a Voice from the Cloud said, 'This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased; listen to Him.'" God revealed Jesus as His Son — His beloved — the one in whom He is well pleased and to whom we must listen.

In this revelation atop Mt. Tabor, God showed us the connection between the Old and New Testament. In times past, God spoke to us through the laws and the prophets, (Moses and Elijah); and now in these last days — through His Son.

The story of the Transfiguration of Christ has puzzled the mind of Christians for centuries. It is the clearest New Testament understanding of mystical experience, the experience of spiritual things within the ordinary and the belief that the spiritual reality is greater and more beautiful than any ordinary experience. This is the central mystery of Christ's life.

The primary purpose of Jesus' Transfiguration was to consult his Heavenly Father and to ascertain His plan for Our Lord's suffering, death and

Resurrection. The secondary aim was to make his chosen disciples aware of his Divine glory so that they might discard the worldly ambitions planted in their notions of a conquering political Messiah and remain faithful to him during his trial and the execution which would follow.

The Transfiguration occurred, not so much for the sake of Jesus, but it was so much more for the apostles and us. Like the apostles, we climb down the mountain once again, awed by our own experiences of God, encouraged that we know the Glory of God once again.

The transfiguration by transubstantiation in the Holy Mass is the source of our strength. In the Holy Mass, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus. Hence, it invites us to welcome the transformation of our lives caused by the Holy Spirit and to radiate the grace of the transfigured Lord around us by our Spirit-filled lives.

Just as the Transfiguration of Jesus was meant to strengthen the apostles in their time of trial, each Holy Mass should be 1) our source of Heavenly strength against our own temptations, and a source of renewal for our lives. In addition, each Holy Communion should transform us both internally and externally. 2) God gives us a message of Hope in Jesus' Transfiguration. In moments of doubt, despair and helplessness, Jesus' Transfiguration reminds us of our own coming transfiguration in Heaven, and helps us to reach out to God to hear again His consoling words, "This is my beloved son/daughter in whom I am well pleased."

### **Be Blessed and Be a Blessing.**

Fr. Arul Yagappan, MSFS, M.A (Sociology), B.Ed.