

Fr. Rudy's Reflections
The Second Sunday of Lent
February 25, 2024

The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

I have heard a quote by American author and poet Maya Angelou that gives nuance to the beautiful and mystical scene experienced by disciples Peter, James, and John, as Jesus is transfigured in radiance before their eyes: "If someone shows you who they are, believe them." Perhaps in your own life you have been given a moment of clarity so out of the ordinary that it has transformed your thinking and altered what you believed to be true. At the time, you might have embraced this newfound knowledge with an open mind because you appreciated its truth at once. Or, because we all gravitate toward what we have lived and known, this moment might have caused you confusion and uncertainty. No matter how you might have responded at the time, its revelation likely has stayed with you in remembrance.

In the course of history, many artists, poets, and writers have been fascinated by the idea of this scene on a mountaintop, with a brilliantly glowing Jesus Christ flanked on either side by Moses and the prophet Elijah and the voice of Our Father emanating from a cloud above: "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." This mystical, poetic experience witnessed by the apostles is described in Mark's Gospel halfway through Jesus's ministry and demonstrates that our spiritual reality far surpasses human experience. For a brief moment in time, the apostles, and truly all of us, are given the illuminating clarity of the divinity of Jesus Christ. It is a moment of sublime beauty and resonance; it is a most holy, personal encounter we will remember, as Jesus himself connects the bridge between heaven and earth.

Moses and Elijah appear next to Jesus to represent he is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets, and virtually everything begins and ends in him. As we know, the Old Testament is written with no answer to the question of the promised Messiah. Yet in the New Testament, Jesus truly is the embodiment of the Torah and the laws God gave to Moses and his holy people. Elijah represents all the prophets of the Old Testament who labored to help the people of God as they suffered all the burdens and abuses of their political enemies. Jesus shares the Transfiguration with these important men of God's chosen people and fulfills the promise God made to them. He is the beacon of light who fulfills the destiny of mankind; he is its savior from sin and death.

From the cloud, God says to us, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." These simple, profound words are so fitting to hear and consider during this Lenten season, as we anticipate the passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord. Lent is a time for temperance, generosity, and prayer. But in all sincerity, I ask you, do you "listen to Him" as God has asked us to do? Let us pray during the days ahead:

"Let us ask the Lord that we might prepare ourselves suitably: 'Jesus, beloved Son of the Father, grant that we may listen to you and follow you to Calvary, to the Cross, to share with you in the glory of the Resurrection.'"—St. Pope John Paul II

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Rudy