

Father John's Gospel Reflection



Gospel

GOSPEL – SUNDAY, 6 AUGUST, 2017

- Transfiguration of the Lord

(Matt 17:1-9)

His face was shining like the sun.

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.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection

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- Transfiguration of the Lord

(Matt 17:1-9)

Recall that in Matthew's Gospel Jesus is presented as the new Moses, and so as the three disciples climb the mountain they would recall Moses on Mt. Sinai. The early readers of this Gospel would hear echoes of Exodus 24-how Moses leaving Aaron behind with the other elders, takes Joshua with him up the mountain, where after six days, the glory of the Lord burned on the mountain top, and gave Moses the words of the covenant (Exodus 24:13-18)

Jesus now becomes the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets- Jesus and his followers are now the new players in the old old story of God's encounter with God's people.

Recall too the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 11:13-17) – the heavens are opened, the spirit alights on Jesus, and a voice from heaven is heard. Also others, who later heard this passage read to them, recall the Easter story (Matthew 28:3), about lightning, and dazzling white clothing. Again, they would recognise that Jesus' dazzling appearance of Jesus is consistent with the apocalyptic vision in Daniel 7:9 of the Son of Man, the Son of Humanity appearing in glory. Now, Jesus in the presence of Moses and Elijah has its own significance. Peter, though he does not fully comprehend what is happening, exclaims, "it is good for us to be here!" and in one of a long line of compulsive gestures, attempts to preserve this moment by building tents.

Again Jesus knowing what will happen to him and his early followers consoles them, "do not be afraid." His words reassure them that whatever happens next will be in God's hands, no matter how frightening the circumstances. (Matthew 1:20; 10:26; 28:5,10)

Finally, it is on another mountain that Jesus' followers receive the promise that his story and theirs will be forever intertwined, whether they are on mountain tops, or in valleys, or somewhere in between: "Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt 28:20)

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1. Reflect on all the good things in our lives - family, friends, health and creation and say as Peter did, "It is good for us to be here."
2. Remember in our lives, as in the life of Jesus and his disciples, there are good times and bad, challenging times and joyful times, but thank God for all these experiences.
3. Let us remain on the journey with the Lord, that one day we will inherit the promise of resurrection and life in the Kingdom.

Take home Message