

## Transfiguration of Jesus

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The past week has been one of many changes for our country. Punjab, Uttarkhand, UP, Goa and Manipur had all gone in for elections and numerous new state governments have come to power. It was also the week in which the International women's day was celebrated and today we have our own women leading and taking part in the service. In the midst of all this we are into our period of Lent remembering the transfiguration of the Lord Jesus. How does the transfiguration of Jesus affect our lives today in the midst of all these political changes? The theme for our meditation this morning is that 'the transfiguration reveals the true glory and authority of Jesus the Son of God.' Mark records for us that after six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him and led them up a high mountain where He was transfigured. His clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. The reference to six days shows that this incident comes after the Caesarea Philippi event where Jesus teaches the disciples to suffer and to die and the need for each one of His followers to take up their cross and follow him. The three disciples witness divine power and glory which preceded the apparent defeat on the cross. The paradox of the mission of the rejected Messiah is at the heart of the powerful coming of the kingdom of God. The point is that suffering precedes glory for Jesus and all those who follow Him.

Elijah and Moses appear on the scene and they were talking with Jesus about his immediate death. Peter does not know how to respond to this amazing phenomenon and therefore wants to build some kind of a monument in remembrance of the event. Moses is the representative of the covenant made with the people of Israel after the Exodus at Mount Sinai. That covenant points to the saving work of Jesus through His death and the establishment of the New Covenant. Elijah was seen as the appointed restorer of all things and he was to come before the Messiah came (Mal 4:5-6). That is why they speculate whether Jesus is the new Elijah (Mk 8:28). Moses too featured in their eschatological hopes because a prophet like Moses (Deut 18:15-19) would arise symbolizing the coming of the messianic age. They also hear the voice of God insisting that they must, against all their natural inclinations, listen to Jesus as He insists on suffering as the way to glory, and as He calls on them to give up their own lives to gain them, indeed to take up their own crosses and to follow Him.

A cloud then envelopes them and reveals the authority of Jesus. The cloud echoes the Sinai experience where God reveals himself to Moses. A voice says "this is my beloved Son, listen to Him". The face of Moses glowed after His divine encounter. Here Christ is transfigured and their eyes were opened to 'behold the Lamb of God' who takes away the sin of the world. They were called to listen to Him. Obedience is called for, from all His followers. We are to listen to Jesus. Jesus then tells them that they should not share this experience with others now, but only after His resurrection.

The transfiguration reveals the true glory of Jesus, His divine purpose and His authority. As His followers it gives us great confidence that suffering will result in glory as we follow His footsteps. Jesus came to suffer and die for our sins so that we too may be glorified with Him. Jesus' own resurrection gives us the hope of the resurrection that we too will be with Him. May we then stand firm in our faith in the midst of the shifting sands of time.

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11th March, 2012