

Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

Psalms 97:1-2, 5-6, 9

2 Peter 1:16-19

Matthew 17:1-9

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When we recite the Creed together each Sunday, we affirm our belief in the “Second Coming” – the conviction that Jesus Christ will one day “come again to judge the living and the dead.” Yet, we also have scriptural evidence that our lord never really *left* in the first place. For example, in the twenty-eighth chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, we have his assurance: “I am with you always, even to the end of the world” (MT 28:20). Theologians attempting to reconcile these two truths have suggested that while Christ has remained with us since the moment of the Incarnation, for the time being, his presence isn’t immediately evident to everyone. When the event we call the “Second Coming” occurs, his glorified presence will be obvious. There will be no hiding from it. In today’s Gospel, when Jesus stands transfigured before Peter, James and John, with his face shining like the sun and his clothes white as light, they are being given a preview of that awe-inspiring day. In a way, in hearing the scripture passage proclaimed, we too are afforded a glimpse of our lord in glory.

Peter, James and John must have come down from the mountain of the Transfiguration inspired, emboldened and better prepared to face the trials to come. Our graced encounter with this Gospel will have a similar effect on each of us. Then, we will have to go out and continue to live our lives “between the times.” The phrase, “between the times,” traditionally denotes the period of time between the Resurrection on one hand, and of the Final Judgment on the other. Between these times, as we’ve suggested, Christ’s presence with us

remains real, if not apparent. One day everyone will know he's there. We aren't willing to wait till then. As lovers of Christ, we devote ourselves to the life-long discipline of cultivating our senses in order to recognize his presence at every moment. And when we encounter him, in the Sacraments, in Scripture, in Creation, in art, in one another, we are privileged to feel infinitely loved. Then, we too are transfigured, by a depthless joy, that we long to share with whomever Christ sends our way.