

# Encouragement Encouragement

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*Transfiguration - Transformation*

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The Feast of the Transfiguration and Assumption are both celebrated this month. At first glance they do not seem to have much in common. One centres on Jesus and the Apostles, Peter, James and John, and we see the Prophets Moses and Elijah, the other focusses on Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Yet they are closely linked by one specific act and that is of being changed and listening to the voice of God the Father. Mary lets the voice of God so penetrate her very being that she accepted the call to be the Mother of Jesus, Creator and Redeemer of the world.

Within her she held the Holy Spirit of God to such an extent that it literally transformed her being and she became pregnant with the Word. This transformation enabled her to stay close to her Son even when agony invaded her life and could have led her to abandon Him – being overwhelmed by pain. This faithfulness changed her to such an extent that body and soul belonged to ‘life’ and therefore her whole being was taken up to the Throne of God at her death, her sleep in the Lord transfigured/transported her to Life Eternal without her body suffering decay.

Have you ever seen someone at prayer being so absorbed that they become somehow aglow, somehow changed, altered. They are still the same person but their attitude transforms their face. I once saw a priest, a founder, who was very elderly and looked very tired and ‘broken’ as he sat on the altar, waiting to preach. At the appropriate moment he got up and suddenly he became a changed man, full of fire and zeal. The promises of God poured out of his heart and mind, and one person exclaimed loudly ‘La Figura de Dio’ – ‘The Face of God’. When finished he sat down and once again assumed the mantle of a humble man.

Jesus reveals His true identity to Peter, James and John. He took them to a high place – Mount Tabor – and showed them who He really was, with two great prophets at His side who had been changed and stood

speaking of the suffering that Jesus, Saviour, was about to undergo. The Apostles were overwhelmed by the Presence of God and with Holy Joy. They were afraid, yet wanted to stay in that Presence. They did not understand yet that in order for all of us to be transfigured, the Son of God had to suffer and die. They had not learned to listen.

Yet both Elijah, who was taken up to Heaven in a chariot, and Moses who had come down from the mountain having ‘seen’, ‘heard’, God in a burning bush with his face so changed, it had to be veiled, are very good examples of the transformation of those who listen.

A parish priest preached the following homily which beautifully makes this point:

Today’s Gospel puts before us the powerful scene of the Transfiguration of Jesus on the top of Mount Tabor, where, in the presence of His three friends, His Divine nature shines through. And from this revelation His disciples learned there is much more to Jesus than meets the eye. We too are encouraged to do what Jesus did – we must become **transfigured** ourselves. Within each one of us there is a lot of mystery and richness that is waiting to be revealed, and like Jesus we are called to let our **Divinity** shine through. At our Baptism, we all receive the Divine Light of God, through the infusion of The Holy Spirit. He is within each one of us for a purpose, and that purpose is, **to make Him known to others and to bring God’s love into a darkened world.**

We are all Christ bearers and through the goodness of our lives, the light of his love will shine out of us. But for this to happen we need to be transformed or transfigured and the only way we can be transfigured and transformed is by ‘falling in love with God’. Falling in love with God is for all of us, our hearts have been made for this to happen. This doesn’t mean that we have to love the world less, or the people in it, less, in fact it means that we should love them more.



“In this theatre of prayer and scripture, Glory comes” Joseph O’Hanlon



So whenever we love “passionately, sensitively and faithfully” we are already in love with God. We will know that we are in love with God when we don’t feel the need to be successful, or the need to be liked, or the need to be praised because these needs in us will have been transcended. We will also find that we can forgive almost anyone, we will find forgiveness easier, we will no longer want to compare or compete or complain and we will stop judging, blaming and resenting, because our vision of love will be deeper.

The capacity to do all these things lies within each of us. We have the potential to be really loving people and we become transfigured as we achieve more and more of our potential and let the best of us shine through. Every day is an opportunity to develop our God given talents to better ourselves and the lives of others.

Each of us here today has a load of Divine qualities within us, just waiting to be released and revealed. Qualities like, tolerance, forgiveness, mercy, wisdom, and unconditional love all waiting to see the light of day, all waiting to be revealed in you and me.



We have within us the awesome power to change the lives of others, to bring happiness to others, to raise others up and to bring enrichment and healing into their lives.

But to be this kind of disciple we must listen in prayer to the word of Jesus when He tells us “Let your light shine before others”. That is our vocation in life.

Each of us here today is rich in assets, strengths and virtues, and today’s Gospel is telling us to let these qualities come through in our daily lives. But for this to happen we must practise being good. Goodness doesn’t just happen, we have to work at it, we have to do it, we have to make a conscious decision to be a good person.

So the first thing is to Pray each day. Transfiguration takes place in the presence of God, **not apart from Him**. Transfiguration happens when we eat the Bread of Life, and drink the wine of His Blood at Mass. Then after we have prayed and given time to God we must look for opportunities to let God’s light shine through us.

So this coming week do something special for someone you love. Go out of your way to visit a sick person or someone you haven’t bothered with for a long time. Show your children more affection, send an anonymous financial gift to someone in need or

be a bit more generous in a special collection in church.

Forgive someone from your heart, someone you may have been holding a grudge against, speak to someone you have avoided for a long time. Reach out gently to all members of your family who have stopped practising or living the faith. Doing these kinds of things is what it means to let the Divine side of us shine through to others.

God is calling each one of us to be a transfigured person who shows His love and witnesses to His love in a pretty loveless world. Become a transfigured person by falling in love with God and His people. +++

When we truly listen we become like a huge ‘ear’. We incline our heads towards the speaker. We still, we hang on every word and having received, we become changed. That inner transformation becomes a central act of the believer. Both Word and Sacrament is the agent of that change. In this world of easy access to information we have become superficial in our hearing and seeing, we scan, use short cuts, we abbreviate, all for ease and in so doing we miss the necessary penetration of truth that transforms us. We listen to neither God nor man, save in sound bites. To listen we have to be courageous and open.

Dare we become transformed and transfigured so that others see God’s Glory? Halina Holman

### **Pope Francis**

*“Ascent and descent” is present in Transfiguration, we need to “go aside” and “climb the mountain” in order to have silence and to better hear the voice of the Lord. This we do in prayer, however, we cannot stay there. The encounter with God in prayer drives us once again to ‘come down from the mountain’. We are called, to bring the fruits of the “experience we have had with God” to these brothers who suffer and to “share the grace we have received...” Rome 2013*

### **Feasts in August**

1<sup>st</sup> St. Alphonsus Liguori, 2<sup>nd</sup> St. Peter Julian Eymard, 4<sup>th</sup> St. John Vianney,

6<sup>th</sup> **The Transfiguration of the Lord**

8<sup>th</sup> St. Dominic, 9<sup>th</sup> St. Teresa Benedicta, (Edith Stein)

10<sup>th</sup> St. Laurence (Deacon), 11<sup>th</sup> St. Clare,

14/15<sup>th</sup> **The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary,**

20<sup>th</sup> St. Bernard, 22<sup>nd</sup> Queenship of Mary,

24<sup>th</sup> St. Bartholomew, 26<sup>th</sup> Blessed Dominic Barberi,

27<sup>th</sup> St. Monica – (28<sup>th</sup> St. Augustine),

30<sup>th</sup> Ss. Margaret Clitherow, Ann Line, Margaret Ward,

31<sup>st</sup> St. Aidan and the Saints of Lindisfarne