

Readings: *Daniel 7: 9 – 10, 13 – 14; and / or 2 Peter 1: 16 – 19; Psalm 96 (97);*

Matthew 17: 1 – 9 or Mark 9: 2 – 10 or Luke 9: 28 – 36.

Today's Feast celebrates the occasion on which *Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain...and he was transfigured before them.*

The event is recorded in all three synoptic gospels (Mark, Matthew, and Luke), and is part of a major turning point in the ministry of Jesus. Its meaning is inevitably disguised by the way we hear the gospels in the liturgy – that is to say in chunks which separate each reading from what comes before. In each of the three gospels the Transfiguration is preceded by (i) Peter's confession of faith, (ii) a prediction of the Passion and Resurrection, and (iii) instruction on the requirements for being a disciple. They all end with some form of the teaching: *I tell you that there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.*

It seems that the evangelists are giving us a sequence of events which together mark a shift in the way Jesus continues his journey towards Jerusalem.

First, the disciples, led by Peter, recognize Jesus as the Christ – the Messiah. Secondly, he tells them he will not be the political Messiah they might expect, but will suffer, be killed, and then be raised. Thirdly, he teaches them that those who want to be his disciples must be prepared to share his suffering. And, lastly, he allows three of them – Peter, James, and John – to see the glory that is already his.

Today's liturgy suggests a twofold reason for this revelation: it would prepare the disciples to bear the coming 'scandal of the cross', and it would show how the glory which Christ has will be fulfilled in his Body, the Church.

But we know from the Gospels that the disciples did not take in the implications of this revelation.

When Jesus told them *The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day...they were greatly distressed.*

Only after the Resurrection were the three privileged apostles able to look back and understand the glory which they had seen, and which was being promised to them and all who are one with Christ, including us – provided that we set ourselves to listen to his voice.