

Feast of the Transfiguration

August 6th

Dn 7:9-10, 13-14

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

II Pt 1:16-19

Mt 17:1-9

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Perhaps the motto for the Transfiguration could be the popular song from *The Sound of Music*, "Climb Every Mountain." The first act of Christ's public life was to climb a mountain and fast forty days. Again He is recorded as going up a mountain to pray alone. He went up into a third mountain and preached the Sermon on the Mount - the sum and substance of Christianity, the most provocative words ever uttered by human lips.

But now, the fourth time, He takes these three favorite disciples up Mount Tabor. In temperament, this trio of apostles could have been cut from the same bolt of cloth, for they were impetuous and fiery men; so much so that Christ Himself had dubbed James and John, because of their volcanic tempers, "the sons of thunder," and Peter, "The Rock."

James was the first to die - that's probably why he was there. Peter was the first pope and head of the church that's probably why he was there. John was the last to die - a very difficult thing - that's probably why he was there.

All three were present when He raised from the dead the daughter of Jairus. All three needed to learn the lesson of the Cross and to rectify their false conceptions of the Messiah. All three would later on sleep in the Garden of Gethsemane during His agony. All three must see the glory that shone beyond the scandal of the Cross.

Having reached a small plateau near the summit, they knelt to pray when suddenly they saw Jesus suspended in air. On His left stood Moses, the bearer of the Law, and on His right Elijah, the prince of the prophets of the Old Testament. As the apostles stared in speechless awe, Moses and Elijah, like figures out of focus, began to fade away and, as Sacred Scripture simply states, "They saw no one but Jesus." On Mount Tabor there was no external change, everything was practically the same as before, but there was an internal change, one that was unforgettable to the three apostles. God the Father had spoken to them.

"They saw no one but Jesus." If you could choose one line out of all the golden lines in the New Testament, could you choose a more forceful one than that? Life can be so complicated. Difficulties from the trivial to the tremendous encircle us. People and problems of every caliber - bright and dull, direct and devious, saintly and cynical - touch our lives a dozen times a day. And, amid all this, it is so easy to forget the main purpose of life. Happy is the man whose eye is single, whose aim is high, and whose dedication is complete, 'so that amid the toil and the trouble he sees Christ. The problem today is that so many of us are agitated by so many things, we see everything except Jesus.

Tabor was not the last peak in the mountain range of Christ's life. There was a fifth mountain, there was Calvary. On this mount again He was lifted off the earth, but this time on a cross.