



# He Speaks: Finding Christ in the Days of Lent

## Second Sunday of Lent

Readings: Genesis 12:1-4a, Psalm 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22, 2 Timothy 1:8b-10, Matthew 17:1-9

"Rise, and do not be afraid."

The Transfiguration of Jesus is one of the most unusual scenes in Scripture (aside from a few wild Old Testament moments). Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a mountain, his entire appearance changes, and he's suddenly talking with Moses and Elijah. Then a voice from heaven breaks in, telling the disciples who Jesus is and commanding them to listen to Him. Suffice it to say: this was not a typical day in the lives of these three.

We are a tough bunch in our times, so it can be hard for us to relate to the overwhelming fear this struck into the hearts of John, James, and Peter. We tend to read this as a lovely scene—Jesus' face shining like the sun, dazzling white clothing, an extraordinary meeting on a mountaintop. But Scripture tells us that when the voice boomed, those disciples dropped to the ground, terrified.

But then something even more extraordinary happened. Jesus touched them and said, "Rise, and do not be afraid." And when they looked up, they saw his face.

The Transfiguration showed the disciples exactly who Jesus was. His divinity was no longer in question. And to be in the presence of that revelation would have been intense. We're given this story every year in Lent to remind us of the same truth. Jesus is the Son of God. His word is truth, and we need to listen.

We know this—at least we think we do. But how do we internalize it? How do we move from awareness to deep understanding, acceptance, and ultimately a deeper relationship with Him?

While we might not experience a booming voice from the heavens that scares the dickens out of us, in our time, there is plenty that causes us fear—enough sometimes to drop us to the ground. What if I mess up at work and lose my job? What if my children don't come back to the Church? What if the blood tests bring bad news? How will we pay the bills this month? Yes, these are the things that can lay us out. But in his love for us, Jesus comes and touches us and says, "Rise, do not be afraid." And like the disciples, when we look up again, we see him.

The Transfiguration invites us to see Jesus as He truly is, to let him meet us in the mess of our daily lives. When fear makes us fall, He meets us on the ground. When His touch lifts us, we lift our eyes and find Him again. This Lent, we can practice rising at His voice.

Consider:

Fear and anxiety can be a daily struggle for many people. Scripture, the saints, and indeed Jesus himself, often tell us, "do not be afraid." In the face of real-world struggles, how do you hear this call? Do you dismiss it as impractical—or as something meant for holier people than you? What might change if you began to "rise" and look up for the face of Jesus when you feel anxious, afraid, or alone?

Whisper Prayer:

Jesus, help me to rise.

## Listening with the Church — Second Sunday of Lent

### The Luminous Mystery of the Transfiguration

This Sunday's Gospel is the Transfiguration, which also appears among the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary. In 2002, Pope Saint John Paul II introduced us to the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary, which are traditionally prayed on Thursdays. Pope John Paul II called the Rosary his favorite prayer, "Marvelous in its simplicity and depth." In his Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, he wrote, "The Gospel scene of Christ's transfiguration, in which the three Apostles Peter, James and John appear entranced by the beauty of the Redeemer, can be seen as *an icon of Christian contemplation*. To look upon the face of Christ, to recognize its mystery amid the daily events and the sufferings of his human life, and then to grasp the divine splendour definitively revealed in the Risen Lord, seated in glory at the right hand of the Father: this is the task of every follower of Christ and therefore the task of each one of us." Praying this mystery helps us see that glory and suffering are never far apart in a life of discipleship. We look to Jesus' transfigured face not to escape our trials, but for his strength in facing them.