



AUGUST 6, 2023 | THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

HOLY FAMILY PARISH

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Tazewell, VA 24651

ST. ELIZABETH'S

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Pocahontas, VA 24635

ST. MARY'S

1122 Farmer Street
Richlands, VA 24641

ST. JOSEPH'S

1007 Independence Rd.
Grundy, VA 24614

The Theology of Sunday

ONE WHO does not understand the meaning and theology of Sunday might view it as any other ordinary day. Indeed, as the passing of time in a cycle of seven-days a week becomes commonplace, Sunday disappears from view as something with special theological importance. Most often, people regard Sunday as a day of rest. During that particular day, they would rather stay at their homes and relax from their busy schedule on the other days. For some, it is a time for family gathering and picnic. Others anticipate that day for their shopping sprees and entertainment extravaganzas.

On a more positive observation, it is good to note also that many people go to Mass on Sundays. However, one perennial question seems alarming: Do the majority of Sunday churchgoers really know the theological meaning of Sunday? It is quite providential that Sunday coincides with the civil and cultural day of rest in

most institutions and structures of our society. Subsequently, more people go to Mass on a Sunday because it is the most convenient day of the week to go to Church. But would people still continue to go to Mass on Sundays if they do not have the convenience to do so? In some cases where Sunday is a workday, do people still care to go to Mass?

The first day of the week is important to the life of the Catholic community. It is the day when Christians are obliged to gather and worship the Lord. With all the fondness and predilection that Christianity associates with Sunday, we are inquisitive as to why it became so. Is not God eternal, hence all days are of equal value to Him? Why is Sunday chosen as the day to commemorate the Paschal Mystery of Christ? Why not Saturday, which coincides with the Sabbath day (the primordial feast day of the Jewish people), or any other day?

Sunday became very significant to the Christians when on that day, more than two thousand years ago, Christ rose from the dead to manifest His lordship. The Sacred Scriptures attest to it: Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20. The resurrection account of the four Gospels do not agree on many details, yet the one they all concurred about is that Christ had risen on the morning of Sunday, the first day of the week. Moreover, after His resurrection, Christ also preferred to appear to His disciples on that particular day.

Further references in the Scriptures indicate that the disciples give much importance and meaning to Sunday. Some early writers, like Saint Justin, testify about the Sunday worship of the Christians. Consequently, Sunday was etched on the consciousness of the Christians as a very special and privileged day. It serves as a memorial of the resurrection of Christ and His actual appearances wherein He effectively established Himself as a Divine Being.

Thus, given the unique place of Sunday in the life of the faithful, the Church stresses very much its importance. The Second Vatican Council acknowledges the centrality of Sunday in the life of the Church. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, contains a beautiful description of the significance of Sunday in the life of the Church. The Council Fathers assert the nature of Sunday as a memorial of the resurrection of Christ, which was handed down from the apostles by tradition. Sunday is appropriately called the "Lord's Day," because it is the day of the resurrection of Christ. As such, Sunday is ranked as the first holy day of all. It is the original feast day. In the liturgy, Sunday is replaced only by solemnities or by feasts of the Lord because of its special significance. The Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter seasons, however, take precedence over all solemnities and feasts of the Lord.

The Second Vatican Council also reaffirms that the faithful



Fr. Renier Supranes

are bound and obliged to gather together on Sundays. The essential celebration for Sunday gatherings is the Holy Eucharist. As the Lord's Day, Sunday has been characterized by the Lord's Supper (Eucharist). Sunday is the day of the week on which, by apostolic tradition, the Paschal Mystery is celebrated in the Eucharist in a special way.

What was the Transfiguration?

In both the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, the account of the Transfiguration immediately follows Jesus' prediction of His passion and His stating the arduous demands of discipleship (see Mt 16:21-28; Mk 8:31-38).

We may assume that the Transfiguration not only clearly revealed Jesus' divinity for a moment. He also allowed His glory to shine forth for the encouragement of the key apostles who were present: Peter, James and John.

Like so many incidents in Jesus' earthly ministry, the Transfiguration was foreshadowed in the Old Testament. In this case, the type (the foreshadowing) is God's revelation of himself to Moses on Mount Sinai. The "Ignatius Catholic Study Bible (Gospel of Matthew)" lists several parallels between the two epiphanies as recorded in Exodus and in St. Matthew's Gospel.

Each takes place on a mountain (see Ex 24:13 and Mt 17:1).

Each occurs on a seventh day (Ex 24:16 and Mt 17:1).

Each shows forth the glory of God's presence.

Each reports God speaking through a cloud (Ex 24:16 and Mt 17:5).

Moses and Elijah are the key representatives of the Law and the prophets. Their coming to talk with Jesus shows Him to be the fulfillment of God's revelation to them.

Only Luke specifies the subject of their conversation with Jesus. Moses and Elijah "spoke of his [Jesus'] exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem" (Lk 9:31).

Note the word "accomplish." It was important for the apostles to know that Jesus did not simply endure His passion; He accomplished it, by totally submitting himself to it.

A final note: Peter proposed building three booths, one each for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. He may have wished to extend their stay on the Mount of Transfiguration. But St. Mark, who was Peter's protégé, simply tells us that Peter blurted out this proposal because "he hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified" (9:6).

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OFFICE MANAGER/ BOOKKEEPER

Lydia St. Peter

OFFICE HOURS

Mon–Fri 9:30AM – 2:30PM

Please call the parish office to make arrangements for the **Sacraments of Baptism, Anointing of the Sick or Holy Matrimony** as well as funerals. **Reconciliation** is available from 30 minutes before a scheduled Mass.

MASS TIMES

SATURDAY

4PM – St. Joseph's

6PM – St. Mary's

SUNDAY

9AM – St. Elizabeth's

11:30AM – St. Theresa's

TUESDAY & FRIDAY

10AM – St. Theresa's

Cover image:

Peter Paul Rubens, *The Transfiguration of Christ*, 1605

Trust your disgust

By Matthew Petrussek, wordonfire.org

THE DEVIL's greatest trick, the adage goes, is convincing the world he doesn't exist. His second is duping humanity into believing that poison both tastes good and is good for us. The ruse goes all the way back to the moment just before the fall, when Eve, prompted but not coerced by the serpent, beholds the fruit that God had directly warned would be fatal if consumed:

The woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom. (Gen. 3:6).

Eve succumbs to the temptation and bites. Adam, who the text implies has been watching the whole time, sinks his teeth in as well. As forewarned, the joint act of defiance—gratuitous and easily avoidable (God had given them the freedom to eat of every other tree in the garden)—leads to their eventual death, releases chaos into creation, and corrupts every subsequent generation by passing on a taste for moral toxin.

Catholicism holds, however, that though human nature has been corrupted by the fall, it has not been destroyed. We retain the vestiges of natural goodness and original sanity. One indicator comes in the form of moral disgust, an emotional and, often, physical recoil to evil, even if its presence is not an immediate threat. It was disgust, for example, that famously led President Theodore Roosevelt to pass the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act after reading about the abuses of the meatpacking industry in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. Disgust helped turn the tide of the civil rights movements when, in 1965, millions of Americans watched the brutality inflicted upon peaceful marchers in Selma, Alabama. Disgust at witnessing the extermination of an unborn child and seeing the room where abortionist staff stacked and catalogued dismembered babies' bodies compelled Abby Johnson to quit Planned Parenthood and become a pro-life advocate. A sign of good moral health—just as good physical health—is a revulsion to what causes us and everyone else harm.

The devil may hoodwink our minds into pretending that all is well, but our guts know better.

The devil knows we have this defense mechanism,

and so he's found a deviously clever way around it: if we can be convinced to obfuscate the meaning of words, breaking the connection between reality and language, then our moral perception can be altered. Because of the serpent's lie about God's motives and the consequence of eating the fruit ("You certainly will not die!"), for example, Eve begins seeing differently: rather than poison, she now perceives the fruit not only as attractive but as a positive good—a tool for gaining "wisdom." A cancerous syllogism thus buds in the fallen mind:

It is desirable (good) to gain wisdom.

Wisdom includes knowing evil.

Therefore, it is desirable (good) to know evil.

This is the great algebraic inversion of sin, the black hole that human beings, with the assistance but not compulsion of the devil, rip in the fabric of moral reality: good = evil and evil = good.

This may sound abstract, but take a look around and you'll see the sophistic reversal everywhere in secular culture: human rights include the right to kill innocent humans; being healthy includes condemning fitness; being a man includes an entitlement to be a woman; racial justice includes practicing racism; saving humanity from a climate apocalypse includes decimating humanity; saving the natural world from environmental destruction includes destroying the environment; being a good parent entails appropriating babies from their birth mothers. Ugly is the new beautiful. Children are the new consenting adults. Censorship is the new free speech. Machines are the new (improved!) humans.

Evil is often portrayed with grotesquely frightening imagery. That may get the underlying reality of evil right, but not its operational strategy. Evil propagates most effectively under the guise of the good. That's why abortion, transgenderism, the suppression of speech, racist employment and admission policies, and no less than totalitarian climate change initiatives (like banning private cars) all sell themselves under the banners of "health," "safety," "freedom," "love," and "justice."

How, then, can we tell the difference between the ersatz good and the authentic good? How can we dis-

tinguish between what is beneficial for us, even if, like medicine, it may go down hard, and what drags us into the dark, even as it lights up every pleasure sensor along the way?

One tool is to conscientiously activate our reason, critically examining everything we hear about what's good, bad, right, and wrong to determine which of it is true. To be sure, our first parents failed this test miserably, which should have been the easiest act of due diligence in human history. They knew, as directly as one can know, that God is real and that he desires nothing else than their complete happiness. Yet they didn't think things through, missing the obvious answer to the question, "Is it a good idea to disobey the Creator of the universe?"

Yet we continue to do the same thing. How many drug addicts have said, "Sure, smoking meth led everyone else into a living hell, but I'll be the exception"? How many broken families has the statement "It's just a fling—and, besides, she'll never find out anyway" produced? More broadly, how many nightmarish autocracies were birthed in the declaration, "We need to temporarily suspend these rights for the good of the people?" To paraphrase (and alter the calculations of) Thomas Edison, virtue is 10% rumination and 90% perspiration. We usually know exactly what we need to do. We just don't want to do it, and so find a way to think ourselves out of it. We rationalize rather than reason.

Which points to the second tool for sifting the moral wheat from the chaff: the smell test. Sometimes sin has so scrambled our reason that we not only whistle past the graveyard but organize a whole parade to dance by the tombs (and demand everyone celebrate with us). Yet notwithstanding what philosopher Peter Kreeft has called our "spiritual insanity," we all remain creatures created in the image and likeness of God who, as such, have both an attraction to good and a repugnance to evil embedded in our spiritual and physical nature—a nature that we can suppress and mutilate, but never extinguish.

So, do you feel queasy seeing men "chest-feeding" infants or dressed like clownish prostitutes gyrating in front of children? Does righteous disdain well up at the sight of an effete boy in a one-piece swimsuit gleefully perched over two girls on an award podium? Does a stab of noble contempt accompany hearing that talented workers are being denied jobs and promotions because of the color of their skin? Did your eyes squint, jaw clench, and stomach tense up upon reading that 20+ armed FBI agents were sent, raid style, to arrest a peaceful pro-life advocate in front of his wife and children while the same government permits and even encourages violent anarchy in the streets?

Grab that feeling and follow it all the way down. The devil may hoodwink our minds into pretending that all is well, but our guts know better. Time to spit that poison out.



mass intentions

Date	Intention
8/5 SATURDAY	
4PM	
6PM	
8/6 SUNDAY	
9AM	Mike Rocchetti ☩
11:30AM	Gerard Rynne ☩

stewardship of treasure

Donations Received as of August 6 (Week 5)		
CHURCH	ATTENDANCE	OFFERINGS
St. Joseph's	9	\$230
St. Elizabeth's	25	\$414
St. Mary's	17	\$569
St. Theresa's	75	\$1,205
Total	126	\$2,418
Outside Donations		
Year to Date Received		\$16,120
Goal		\$14,135
Ahead/Behind Goal		+ \$1,985

please pray for

Louise Serreno*	Virginia Dy
Gerry Hankins	Mary Muncy
Clarence Moore	Cindy Lambert
Lexi Cox	Helen Petro
Sarah Wall	Clinard Coleman
Tammy Bennett	Joan Harrison
Margaret Wasilewski	Joe & Yvonne Blevins
Nic Ulate	Kyle Brown
Frannie & Rayburn Minton	Jeffrey Parkhurst
Sue Bailey	Sarah Walters
Christian Lambert	Amelia Proffit
Shane Neal	Maurice Law
Pete Belcher	Zac Carter
Lucas Boyd	Dennis & Frances Savage
Ralph Heldreth	Nancy Jo Testerman
Chris Jessie	Donnie Neal
Leo Brown	Josh Cornwell
Carolina Ferrare	John Shumate
Junior Aiken	Doug Vance
Jeanne Hash	Russ Hatfield
Lara Marshall	Connie Pace
Carol & Jim Shumate	Jody Hamilton
Andrew Satmary	Jeanne Ameli
Glenn Harrison	Bella Tester
Donna Petro	Annette Pike
Christian Marshall	Everett Neese
Tina Rocchetti	Sharon Mullady
Alice Godin	Veronica Ross
Randy Snyder	Skip Reynolds
Bryan Gunter	Danny McNamara
Michael Beavers	Louie Negroni
Natalie Dodge	Angela Dalton
Roger Empson	Anna Wright
Dreama Ritter	Mary Gobble
Marco Warner	Karen Hart
Chris Lambert	Judson Dalton

council members

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Kathy & Bob Buchanan, Randy Bolling, Doug Vance, Anne Danko, Jim Talbert, Jackie Shawver, Lydia St. Peter

parish news & events

Bible Study is held at St. Theresa's every Wednesday at 7PM. We are discussing the following Sunday's readings to gain a better understanding prior to Mass.

The parish office will be closed on **Monday, August 7**.

Proper Genuflection?

What's the proper way to genuflect? The General Instruction on the Roman Missal (GIRM) states, "A genuflection, made by bending the right knee to the ground, signifies adoration, and therefore it is reserved for the Most Blessed Sacrament, as well as for the Holy Cross from the solemn adoration during the liturgical celebration on Good Friday until the beginning of the Easter Vigil.... All who pass before the Most Blessed Sacrament genuflect, unless they are moving in procession" (No. 274).

This explains the "what" and "how" of genuflecting. To understand the "why" we need look no further than the courtesy we offer guests — or consider the respect we show individuals when we are introduced to them. In each case we make some sign to acknowledge and honor the individual. It may be nothing more than standing and extending our hand when a person comes into the room, or nodding when another extends a hand to us; the point is, we recognize the person and make a gesture that sets the individual apart, if only momentarily.

When we enter a church, we enter God's house. Genuflecting before the tabernacle acknowledges God as our host and expresses thanks for the invitation that draws us into communion with His Son.

During Mass, one bows to the altar whenever crossing before it. The altar symbolizes Christ and becomes the focus during holy Mass. Lectors bow to the altar upon entering and exiting the sanctuary area.

birthdays & anniversaries:

AUGUST 6: Jerry & Donna Lambert (anniversary), Brian & Lisa French (anniversary), Rod Shrewsbury
7: Rod & Theresa Shrewsbury (anniversary)

"This is my beloved *Son*, with whom I
am well pleased; listen to him."
-Mt 17:5c



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