

REFLECTION

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Each year on August 6, we celebrate the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord. It commemorates the biblical event when Jesus Christ revealed his divine glory to the Apostles Peter, James, and John on a high mountain. The event of the Transfiguration is recorded in three Gospels: Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-8, and Luke 9:28-36. Jesus took the Apostles Peter, James, and John with Him up upon a mountain,

and while they were on the mountain Jesus was transfigured. His face shone like the sun, and His garments became glistening white. Tradition names Mount Tabor as the site of the revelation. A church first raised there in the fourth century was dedicated on August 6. A feast in honor of the Transfiguration was celebrated in the Eastern Church from about that time. Western observance began in some localities about the eighth century. Here is the address of St. John Paul II delivered on August 6, 1999, during the commemorative Mass for Pope Paul VI

In the Words of

ST. JOHN PAUL II

Today, the Eucharist which we are preparing to celebrate takes us in spirit to Mount Tabor together with the Apostles Peter, James and John, to admire in rapture the splendour of the transfigured Lord. In the event of the Transfiguration we contemplate the mysterious encounter between history, which is being built every day, and the blessed inheritance that awaits us in heaven in full union with Christ, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.

We, pilgrims on earth, are granted to rejoice in the company of the transfigured Lord when we immerse ourselves in the things of above through prayer and the celebration of the divine mysteries. But, like the disciples, we too must descend from Tabor into daily life where human events challenge our faith. On the mountain we saw; on the paths of life we are asked tirelessly to proclaim the Gospel which illuminates the steps of believers.

This deep spiritual conviction guided the whole ecclesial mission of my venerable Predecessor, the Servant of God Paul VI, who returned to the Father's house precisely on the Feast of the Transfiguration, 21 years ago now. In the reflection he had planned to give at the Angelus on that day, 6 August 1978, he said: "The Transfiguration of the Lord, recalled by the liturgy of today's solemnity throws

a dazzling light on our daily life, and makes us turn our mind to the immortal destiny which that fact foreshadows". Yes! Paul VI reminds us: we are made for eternity and eternity begins at this very moment, since the Lord is among us and lives with and in his Church.

As we commemorate my unforgettable Predecessor in the see of Peter with deep emotion, let us pray that every Christian will know how to draw courage and constancy from contemplating Christ, who "reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature" (Heb 1:3), in order to proclaim and witness faithfully through his words and works.

May Mary, our tender and caring Mother, help us to be bright rays of the saving light of her Son Jesus.

