

- Mt. Tabor, where Jesus was transfigured, is one of the most beautiful and peaceful places in the Holy Land. As you stand on that holy mountain where today's Gospel takes place, you get a wonderful view of the verdant Galilean countryside, and it's easy to feel God's presence there.
- The last time I was there, something very special happened as I offered Mass in the little chapel dedicated to Moses. Because the sun was low in the sky, throughout Mass beautiful rays of sunlight shone through the grates in the upper part of the outside door.
- As the Mass progressed and the sun continued to go down, those rays of light kept moving along the floor and up the altar until I got to the consecration, when those beams of sunlight shone right on the altar – reflecting off of the gold of the chalice and paten.
- So just as I was praying the words of consecration so that the bread and wine would become the Body and Blood of Christ, they were bathed in a glorious light – as if they were being Transfigured, just as our Lord was on that same mountain 2000 years ago.
- The five of us who were there were all astonished. It was one of those moments in life when the natural and supernatural collide in an unmistakable way. I distinctly remember feeling not only joy and gratitude at such a grace, but a strong sense of hope. God is with us!
- Seeing that little miracle, if you will, made me desire Heaven and our Lord all the more. It made me desire to be transfigured myself into an image of Christ.
- As is always the case, the 2nd Sunday of Lent is dedicated to Jesus' Transfiguration, and Holy Mother Church encourages us to meditate on this mystery as a remembrance of Jesus' omnipotence, but also as an encouragement to be transfigured ourselves through God's grace.
- Last Sunday we heard about our Lord's temptation in the desert, and the beauty of that Gospel story is that it reminds us that we don't have to be slaves to sin, but that with Christ's help every temptation can be overcome.
- And today we are reminded of the glory that awaits us if we do overcome the sin and temptation in our lives through God's grace! We will be transfigured!
- In today's Gospel we hear God the Father speak, saying: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him."
- You might remember 7 weeks ago on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, we heard God the Father say: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." But today, the Father adds the words: "Listen to Him."
- Whereas at the Baptism, the Father was concerned only with the manifestation of Jesus' true identity, today He adds the words "Listen to Him" to teach us what we must do in order to be transfigured ourselves and so enter into His glory!
- We must listen to the Lord, following His commands, heeding His counsels, and most importantly imitating Him in every way. To be transfigured like Christ in the glory of Heaven, we must strive to be like Him now.
- Moreover, there is a purification process through which we must pass if we are to be transfigured into an image of Christ and are to enjoy an eternity with our Lord. This is what St. Paul is getting at in our 2nd reading today.
- In this epistle to St. Timothy, St. Paul tells us: "Beloved, bear your share of hardship for the Gospel with the strength that comes from God. He saved us and called us to a holy life, not according to our works but according to His own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began..."

- In other words, we must be willing to follow our Lord up the steep and rocky path of Calvary. We must be willing to accept and bear whatever crosses He allows in our lives, but to do so with absolute confidence that His grace will be sufficient.
- St. Paul is clear here: He tells us we must make use of the strength that comes from God's grace. As God has saved us and called us to a holy life, He will give us the grace we need to accomplish His plan.
- But we must be willing to trust that His grace will be with us and strengthen us to bear the weight of our crosses.
- Brothers and sisters, getting to Heaven is not easy. We must contend with temptations to sin and the onslaughts of the devil – as we learned from last Sunday's Gospel.
- And we must have a willingness to suffer, and to suffer with faith in God's grace and the hope of Heaven in our hearts.
- Yet, if we can do this; if we can live in faith, hope, and charity through the darkness of our fallen world, then we too will be transfigured in glory with our Lord and with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom.
- As we all know, our parish has been through a lot of losses in our liturgical life these past 5 months. It's been quite a cross for a lot of us. But I want to tell you how pleased I am by the way our parish is handling our share of the hardship for the Gospel!
- I'm grateful for the grace and spiritual maturity you've shown in the face of an ugly situation. I'm grateful for your willingness to be humble and obedient. I'm grateful for your patience. I'm especially grateful for your striving to be as reverent as possible with Holy Communion.
- Your witness in this regard has made my cross a little lighter. So, thank you. And let's all resolve to continue being as reverent as we can with our Eucharistic Lord. And by bearing well this cross on the shoulders of our parish, may we all be transfigured in glory!