

Homily
His Eminence
Gérald Cyprien Cardinal Lacroix
Archbishop of Quebec
Primate of Canada

FÊTE DE LA TRANSFIGURATION DU SEIGNEUR
(FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD)

*Congrès Suprême des Chevaliers de Colomb,
Centre des Congrès, Québec, 6 août 2024*

« *This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!* »

Dn 7 : 9-10,13-14 • Ps 97 : 1-2, 5-6, 9-11 • 2 P 1 :16-19 • Mk 9, 2-10

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we enter into the 142nd Supreme Convention of the Knights of Columbus on this August 6th, the Church celebrates the beautiful and meaningful **Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord**.

In Christian teachings, the transfiguration is a pivotal moment, and the setting on the mountain is presented as the point where human nature meets God: the meeting place of the temporal and the eternal, with Jesus as the connecting point, acting as the bridge between heaven and earth.

At the baptism of Jesus, a voice from heaven declares, **“*This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.*”**^[1] Of course it was the Father’s voice, the only voice that could come from the heavens at that moment. The baptism of Jesus signifies the beginning of His public ministry. Although baptism, as administered by John the Baptist was a sign of repentance, the baptism of Jesus was unique because He is sinless and did not need to repent. His baptism, therefore, signaled His identification with sinners and the beginning of His redemptive work.

The only other time in the Gospels that the voice of the Father is heard is at Transfiguration. At the baptism God had addressed Jesus himself; now he speaks to the **disciples** about Jesus, revealing a status that far exceeds that of Moses and Elijah.

“This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!”

This event sheds its radiant light on the whole journey to the cross that is to follow. Coming right after the announcement of the passion, it is a visible anticipation – a prophecy – of what Jesus has just revealed about his resurrection and future glory. For a brief moment the veil of ordinariness is lifted, and the three privileged disciples see Jesus as he really is, his human nature suffused with his divine glory^[2].

Jesus brings up to the mountain only the most intimate circle of his disciples, **Peter, James, and John**, those who were to have prominent roles in the early Church and would most need to be **strengthened in faith** to lead the others on the difficult road ahead. He leads them up a high mountain, the “Sinai” of the new covenant, where God’s glory is revealed, not in the thunder, lightning, smoke, and fire of the exodus, but in **the transfigured face of Jesus**.

The two great figures of the old covenant, whom the three disciples recognize as Elijah, the wonder-working prophet, and Moses, the great lawgiver, disappear. **« Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus. »**

At the peak of this experience the disciples suddenly find themselves with Jesus alone. Moses and Elijah have already accomplished their tasks, but Jesus must now complete the Father’s plan by going to the cross. His own life and mission will be the fulfillment that transcends all that took place in the Old Testament.

Let’s bring this home, to us today. The Word of God is a living Word and speaks to us today by the work of the Holy Spirit and sheds light on our own personal journey as well as our journey as a Christian Community.

How do the words that were pronounced by God the Father on the day of the Transfiguration and heard by the disciples, resonate in us, in you today: ***“This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!”***

We too are disciples of Jesus. He has brought us here for this important gathering. I would not hesitate to say that we were chosen to be here, in many different ways of course. It is not a coincidence that we are here on this hill, Parliament Hill in Quebec. We’re not here for a political rally but to encounter the Living God and be strengthened

in faith. Hills and mountains in the Bible are often places where special encounters occur between God and His People... just think of Mount Sinai, Mount Tabor, Mount of Beatitudes, Mount Calvary... and so many more. It is there that God reveals himself and speaks to his People.

We too are called, as were Peter, James and John, to accomplish important responsibilities in the Church. Just look around you and see all the brothers, couples, families, deacons, priests, bi-shops here today that are committed, generously engaged, **ON MISSION** in today's Church and world, bringing the witness of faith, serving the needy and supporting the local Christian communities.

I would even dare to say that as the disciples that experienced the Transfiguration of the Lord, just after having listened to Jesus share with them that he was on his way to his passion and death, we too would prefer not going through trials and difficulties and go straight to Resurrection Sunday, bypassing Good Friday! But that is not the way Jesus chose. So as the first disciples, **we too need to be strengthened in faith** to lead our brothers and sisters on the difficult road ahead.

The experience of Transfiguration is for us as it was for the disciples that accompanied Jesus on Mount Tabor an eye opener: **« Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus. »**

I see this as an invitation to all of us, as a community of faith, to move towards Jerusalem, in a loving, obedient response to our Lord. At this very critical time in the life of Jesus, he needs disciples who will have faith in Him and walk with Him. Rather than remaining where there is comfort and safety, we too need to move towards the unknown, to a place where we will no longer feel we are in control and advance in faith, faith in Jesus. **Then we can be used by God as God intends... To bring Christ to others.**

In the Awards Ceremony last evening, we heard some beautiful testimonies of brother Knights, families, Councils and Assemblies that do just that. They put their faith in Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of God and **listen to Him...** and that is the key to be **ON MISSION** with determination, courage, and zeal.

Brother Knights, dear families and friends, as we “come down the mountain” in a few days after this Convention and go home to where we live, work and serve, may we listen to Jesus and follow Him. In Him is our salvation. In Him, we too will discover how to bring the Good News of the Gospel to our brothers and sisters. **In Him, with Him and through Him, we will be ON MISSION.**

[\[1\]](#) Matthew 3, 17.

[\[2\]](#) This homily was inspired by the work of Mary Healy, in her book, *The Gospel of Mark, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture*, Baker Academic, 2008.