

Sunday in the Second Week: The Transfiguration

At that time Jesus taketh unto Him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart; and He was transfigured before them. And His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as snow. And behold there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with Him. And Peter answering said to Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here; if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them; and lo, a voice out of the cloud saying, This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. And the disciples hearing fell upon their faces, and were very much afraid; and Jesus came and touched them, and said to them, *Arise, and fear not.* And they lifting up their eyes saw no one, but only Jesus. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them saying: *Tell the vision to no man till the Son of man be risen from the dead.*

The Gospel according to St Matthew, XVII:1-9.

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will consecrate the whole of next week to meditating upon the gospel of tomorrow which contains the recital of the mystery of the Transfiguration. We will meditate tomorrow upon the two first circumstances which are the choice made by Jesus Christ for the Transfiguration: first, of a place apart and solitary (Matt. XVII:1); second, of a high mountain. We will then make the resolution: first, not to frequent the world excepting from necessity and to love to be alone with God only; second, to detach ourselves from everything to which our heart is still bound here below. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of our meditation: *“Jesus led His disciples to a high mountain apart.”*

Meditation for the Morning

Let us transport ourselves in spirit upon Thabor; let us admire the choice which Our Lord made of this solitary place, apart from the world, of this high mountain which rises nearer heaven. There is in this choice a double secret reason. Let us beg God to enable us to understand it.

WHY OUR LORD CHOSE FOR HIS TRANSMUTATION A PLACE APART FROM THE WORLD

By this choice Our Saviour wills to teach us that it is not in the midst of the world and of worldly thoughts that God reveals Himself to the soul and makes it pass from the miseries of the old man to the splendours and virtues of the new man. In order to see God, to hear Him, to enjoy Him, and to be transformed into Him by His grace, the first condition required is interior solitude; that is to say, the calm of the soul closed to the turmoil of creatures, open to God alone and to His divine inspirations, the peace of recollection beneath the eye of God. As long as we indulge in dissipation of the mind, the wanderings of the imagination, the affairs of this world, wooed by attachments, the tumult of useless thoughts; as long, finally, as we do not live in retirement in the solitude of the heart, God will not show Himself to us, and He will only be to us the

unknown God of Athens. His amiabilities and His infinite perfections will not touch us; we shall not love Him, and we shall have no desire to love Him. Strangers to God, we shall be no less strangers to ourselves; we shall not know ourselves, and we shall see nothing in ourselves to correct, nothing to reform, no reason to humble ourselves, to mortify ourselves, to renounce ourselves; and the whole of our life will be spent in forgetfulness of God and in ignorance of ourselves. O dissipation, what harm you do to the soul! O holy recollection, how necessary you are to it! Lead me, O Lord, like Thy apostles, into solitude, and keep my mind and my heart always shut up there!

WHY OUR LORD CHOSE A HIGH MOUNTAIN FOR HIS TRANSFIGURATION

This elevated place, where the apostles were raised above the objects amidst which they had hitherto lived, signifies that, in order to enjoy God, to merit His grace and to sanctify ourselves, we must have a heart raised above all sensible things; a heart greater and higher than the world; we must tread under foot everything that formerly attached us. As long as we cling to anything here below, as long as there is anything on earth which holds us in chains, we shall only crawl miserably in the same paths, and turn round and round in the labyrinth of our miseries, instead of advancing in virtue and strengthening ourselves. If our soul had the wings of the dove, for which the prophet king prayed, in order to fly away into the bosom of God, so long as it remains attached even by only one single thread, it will never be anything else but struggle and torment itself painfully about what retains it, without ever being able to take its flight. But also, if the soul has at last courage enough to break its chains, if it allows itself to be led by Our Lord up the mountain, and if from thence it treads under foot all the vain objects of its attachments, its progress in perfection will immediately begin. In a single day, and with less trouble, it will make more way than it did during the whole time that it dragged along after it the weight to which it was attached. Nothing will retard it on its course, nothing will restrain or distract it from its progress; it will advance easily and freely; for as the Imitation says: "*What is more free than lie who is attached to nothing upon earth?*" If, then, we desire to become solidly virtuous, we must detach ourselves from all that flatters vanity, from all that nourishes effeminacy, from all which piques curiosity, from the frivolities which amuse, the affairs which distract, the society which dissipates us; we must renounce the passion of pleasure and enjoyment, we must not any longer cling so much to earthly comforts; we must satisfy our necessities with discernment, take things only insofar as we really need them, and touch them as it were only lightly and for the moment, like the soldiers of Gideon, or like Jonathan, who took the honey on the end of his staff without making a halt; above all, we must be detached from ourselves, from our tastes and our likings, from our self-will and its caprices, from our self-love and its ambition, which seeks to place itself in all that it says, and to find itself in all that it does; we must break off the excessive care for our health which renders us sensitive in respect to all that annoys and restrains the senses; we must, lastly, rise above ourselves (Lam. III:28), and under the penalty of being lost, we must empty our heart of all that is not God. At what point have we arrived in regard to this universal detachment? It is a more serious question than we think. Let us think of it seriously, and let us labour at it every day.

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.