



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square

Second Sunday of Lent, 12 March 2017

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good Morning!

The Gospel of this second Sunday of Lent presents the narrative of the Transfiguration of Jesus. (cf. Mt 17:1-9). Taking aside three of the Apostles, Peter, James and John, He led them up a high mountain. And that is where this unique phenomenon took place: Jesus' face "shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light" (v. 2). In this way, the Lord allowed the divine glory which could be understood through faith in his preaching and his miraculous gestures, to shine within Him. The Transfiguration was accompanied by the apparition of Moses and Elijah who were "talking with him" (v. 3).

The 'brightness' which characterises this extraordinary event symbolises its purpose: to enlighten the minds and hearts of the disciples so that they may clearly understand who their Teacher is. It is a flash of light which suddenly opens onto the mystery of Jesus and illuminates his whole person and his whole story.

By now decisively headed toward Jerusalem, where he will be sentenced to death by crucifixion, Jesus wanted to prepare his own for this scandal — the scandal of the Cross — this scandal which is too intense for their faith and, at the same time, to foretell his Resurrection by manifesting himself as *the Messiah, the Son of God*. Jesus was preparing them for that sad and very painful moment. In fact, Jesus was already revealing himself as a Messiah different from their expectations, from how they imagined the Messiah, how the Messiah would be: not a powerful and glorious king, but a humble and unarmed servant; not a lord of great wealth, a sign of blessing, but a poor man with nowhere to rest his head; not a patriarch with many descendants, but a celibate man without home or nest. It is truly an overturned revelation of God, and the most bewildering

sign of this scandalous overturning, is the cross. But it is through the Cross that Jesus will reach the glorious Resurrection, which will be definitive, not like this Transfiguration which lasted a moment, an instant.

Transfigured on Mount Tabor, Jesus wanted to show his disciples his glory, not for them to circumvent the Cross, but to show *where the Cross leads*. Those who die with Jesus, shall rise again with Jesus. The Cross is the door to Resurrection. Whoever struggles alongside him will triumph with him. This is the message of hope contained in Jesus' Cross, urging us to be strong in our existence. The Christian Cross is not the furnishings of a house or adornments to wear but rather, the Christian Cross is a call to the love with which Jesus sacrificed himself to save humanity from evil and sin. In this Lenten season, we contemplate with devotion the image of the Crucifix, Jesus on the Cross: this is the symbol of Christian Faith, the emblem of Jesus, who died and rose for us. Let us ensure that the Cross marks the stages of our Lenten journey in order to understand ever better the seriousness of sin and the value of the sacrifice by which the Saviour has saved us all.

The Blessed Virgin was able to contemplate the glory of Jesus hidden in his humanness. May she help us stay with Him in silent prayer, to allow ourselves to be enlightened by his presence, so as to bring a reflection of his glory to our hearts through the darkest nights.

After the Angelus:

Dear brothers and sisters,

I would like to express my closeness to the people of Guatemala who are grieving for the serious and tragic fire that broke out inside the *Casa Refugio Virgen de la Asunción*, causing death and injury to the young women living there. May the Lord welcome their souls, heal the injured, console their grieving families and the entire nation. I pray and ask you to pray with me for all young victims of violence, abuse, exploitation and war. This is a plague, a hidden cry which must be heard by us all and which we cannot continue to pretend not to see and hear.

A warm greeting to all of you here, faithful of Rome and from many other parts of the world.

I greet the pilgrims of Freiburg and Mannheim, Germany, and those of Lebanon, as well as the marathon runners from Portugal.

I greet the parish groups from Gioiosa Ionica and Pachino; the youth from Lodi who are preparing for their "Profession of Faith"; the students from Dalmine and Busto Arsizio: it is true what you say: "No to a culture of waste" [reading a banner held up in the Square]; and the youth choir from Bergamo, "*Goccia dopo goccia*".

Have a good Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch. *Arrivederci!*

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