

The Transfiguration

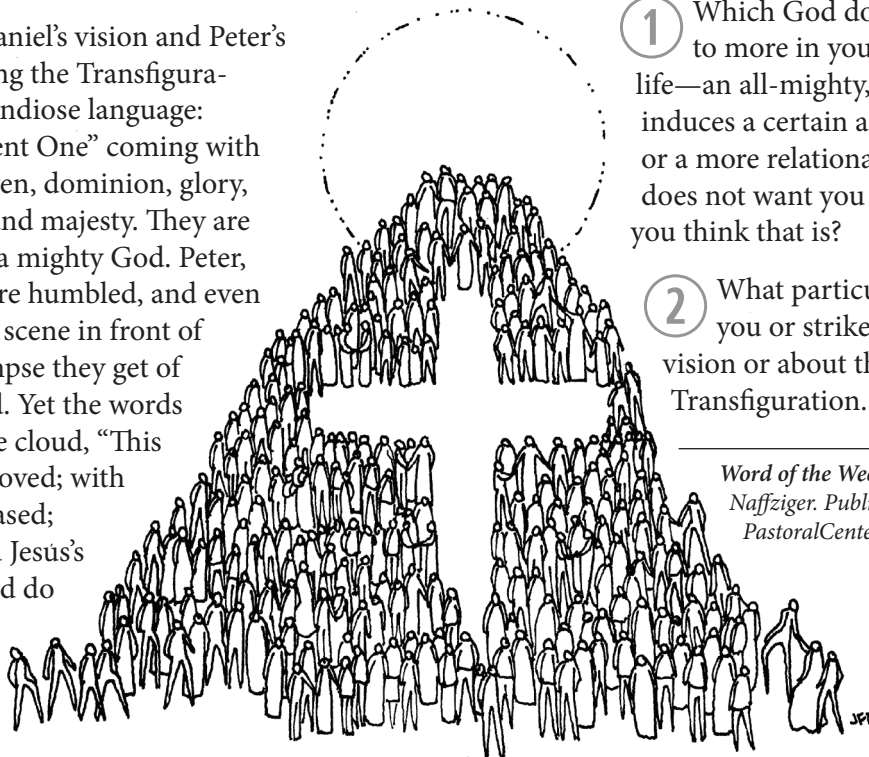
This Week's Readings at Mass

- Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 • Daniel's Vision of the Kingdom of God
- 2 Peter 1:16-19 • Apostolic Witness
- Matthew 17:1-9 • Transfiguration of Jesus

The first reading from the Book of Daniel recounts a vision Daniel had of our all-powerful God enthroned in heaven, his clothing as “white as snow.” In the vision, someone “like a son of man” (a term that came to be associated with Jesus) comes before God and God gives him dominion and glory over all nations and peoples.

When Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him up the mountain where he was transfigured so that his clothes became dazzling white, they very well may have thought of Daniel's vision. As Jews themselves, they would have heard that story read aloud in their synagogues, and they had probably puzzled over what it might mean. By the time Peter wrote the passage in our second reading, he is clear that Jesus was the one symbolized in Daniel's vision, and that God on the throne shares the power and glory with Jesus. “So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed,” Peter wrote about the incident on the mountain top.

The imagery in Daniel's vision and Peter's language describing the Transfiguration are full of grandiose language: thrones, an “Ancient One” coming with the clouds of heaven, dominion, glory, kingship, power, and majesty. They are words describing a mighty God. Peter, James, and John are humbled, and even frightened, by the scene in front of them and the glimpse they get of this powerful God. Yet the words they hear from the cloud, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him,” and Jesus's words, “Get up and do not be afraid” are simple and humble, evok-



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“Jesus led them up a high mountain by themselves. He was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun.”

Sheepish Question:

Recently, where have I seen the mystery of God?
How have I experienced the presence of his Son?

ing tenderness and care, not power and might. The Transfiguration story is another example of Jesus giving people around him a glimpse of an approachable, relational God, a God who invites into faithfulness rather than coercing people through fear or power.

Questions of the Week

- 1 Which God do you imagine or relate to more in your prayer and faith life—an all-mighty, all-powerful God who induces a certain amount of fear in you, or a more relational, tender God who does not want you to be afraid? Why do you think that is?
- 2 What particularly stands out for you or strikes you about Daniel's vision or about the story of the Transfiguration. Why?

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