

Transfigured to Transform

*A Missionary Commentary on the
Sunday Readings*

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 55:1-3
Psalm 145:8-9, 15-16, 17-18
Romans 8:35, 37-39
Matthew 14:13-21

[USCCB link to the Sunday Readings](#)

Friends, personally I can never celebrate the feast of the Transfiguration or pray the fourth luminous mystery of the rosary without connecting them to what happened on August 6, 1945. Seventy-eight years ago the first atomic bomb, a weapon of mass destruction, was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan. In the seaport city of 250,000 people, 100,000 were either killed instantly or doomed to die within a few hours. Another 100,000 were injured. Of the city's 150 doctors, 65 were killed; most others were too injured to serve. Hiroshima became the house of the dead and dying! One could bluntly state: the bombing of Hiroshima is the anti-Transfiguration!

Since the explosion of the first nuclear bomb, recent popes have spoken frequently against nuclear weapons. Pius XII in 1948 asserted that the atomic bomb is "the most terrible weapon that the human mind has ever conceived." John XXIII used his influence to avert a nuclear war during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. Paul VI in 1968 emphasized the urgency of ending the nuclear arms race.

John Paul II in 1981 asserted that "humanity must make a moral about-face" regarding atomic weapons. Benedict XVI stressed on multiple occasions that nuclear weapons imperil the future of humanity. Pope Francis, speaking at the Peace Memorial in Hiroshima on November 24, 2019, emphatically stated that "the use of atomic energy for purposes of war is immoral, just as the possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral."

Recently, Bishop John C. Wester, the Catholic Archbishop of Santa Fe, New Mexico, the birthplace of nuclear weapons, spoke out strongly: "We are the people who designed and built these weapons of mass destruction. We were the first to use them. We must be the people to dismantle them and make sure they are never used again"! **Friends, this is our Transfiguration Sunday mission challenge!**

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Notes on the Sunday Readings

First Reading

Our first reading today is from the “vision section” (chapters 7-12) of the Book of Daniel; it describes the vision of the heavenly court. God is the Ancient One, and the glorified people are presented to God. Here one also finds references to the Son of Man, a title that Jesus uses to speak of himself.

Psalm 97

This psalm proclaims that God is king of all the earth. All creation and all peoples are to surrender to his justice and glory.

Second Reading

This scripture passage from the second letter of Peter, who was a witness to the Transfiguration, gives us Peter’s testimony of that event. He heard the Father’s voice declare: “This is my beloved Son on whom my favor rests.” Peter advises us to keep focused on Christ as one would “on a lamp shining in a dark place.”

Gospel

Today’s Gospel from Saint Matthew narrates the luminous transformation of Jesus. Peter, James, and John witness this unique scene. They see Jesus in conversation with Elijah and Moses. They hear a voice from the cloud proclaiming: “This is my beloved Son on whom my favor rests. Listen to him.”

The apostles were given the gift of the Transfiguration, so that they would have a vision to hold on to when Jesus undergoes his passion and death. The Transfiguration is meant to strengthen the faith of the disciples—and our faith. At every Eucharist, we, Jesus’ disciples, should link Christ’s suffering, death, and glorification into our own personal journey of faith.

We can draw strength from the words of Pope Francis regarding our trials in life: “Challenges exist to be overcome! Let us be realists, but without losing our joy, our boldness, and our hope. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary vigor” (*Evangelii Gaudium* 109).

*Notes and commentary by Rev. James H. Kroeger, MM,
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**Please pray for the missions.
God bless you in all the ways you **Go Forth...****



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