

The Greek verb for 'transfigure' is from the same word of *metamorphosis*, which means a total transformation, a complete change of appearance.

Do you still remember that term from your high school biology, *Metamorphosis* ? It is a life-cycle process by which the young form of insects, such as butterflies, and some animals, such as frogs, develop into the adult form. It is not by coincidence that the Transfiguration is called "The Metamorphosis" in the Greek Orthodox tradition.

Customarily, the reading of the Transfiguration (主顯聖容) of Jesus is proclaimed on the Second Sunday of Lent at the Eucharist as part of the Liturgy of the Word (that is Today). This Christ-event is recorded in three of the Gospels, Mark, Matthew & Luke, and is also mentioned in the Second Letter of Peter. (2 Peter 1:16–18).

Not all events of Christ are recorded in all the Gospels. One Gospel can have one event but the other Gospels do not have it on record. A total of three Gospels, each giving an account of the event, indicates that the community of the early Church considered this Christ-event of the Transfiguration as very, very significant.

In 2002, Pope John Paul II (now St John Paul) introduced the Luminous Mysteries in the rosary, which includes the Transfiguration.

In the mindset of the present day, it is very attractive to portray the story of Transfiguration from some Sci-Fi movie-channel-type of imagination or from the imagery of Harry Potter fiction. Such kind of imagination provides great material for writing fantasy stories for commercial entertainment and literary consumption.

However, that is NOT quite an approach I would recommend you to reflect on today's Gospel story from Matthew. In my view, the Transfiguration narrative is not so much about how Jesus was transfigured, the supernatural process that was visually observed. Rather, it is an account of a significant spiritual experience where the three disciples, Peter, James and John, found their awestruck encounter so transforming. These three fishermen, after they left their fishing nets behind to follow Jesus, yet experienced another life-changing moment, some kind of 'peak experience' on the mountain top, (using some modern psychology terms).

After the Transfiguration of Jesus//, Peter, James and John came to know Jesus in a more profound way. These moments changed them & the profound religious experience was very, very powerful & could sustain them in difficult times. When they were overcome with fear, they are NOT afraid anymore. And they have been charged to share this experience when the moment comes.

Having said that, one cannot stay all the time at a peak experiential moment on the mountain. Peter, James and John had to come down from the mountain top.

In this Lenten Season, we may reflect on our own transfiguration. The journey of following Jesus is not always accompanied by exceptional spiritual 'highs'. What is equally significant, and more important, is persevering fidelity.

Any 'transfiguration' in us must come from within. By the power of God's grace, we are invited to co-operate with the Spirit.