

Week of Transfiguration

First recite the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the weekly section of the Small Catechism. Then read the Proper and assigned Scripture reading followed by the devotion. Conclude with singing the hymn of the week.



Weekly Catechism section: Ninth Commandment and Meaning (Luther's Small Catechism)

Hymn of the Week: How Lovely Shines the Morning Star (TLH 343)

Monday - Introit (Ps. 77:18; 84:1-2, 4, 10-11)

Read Psalm 84.

Our *Introit* comes from two Psalms, one by Asaph and the other by the sons of Korah. Asaph describes how God's glory was revealed in the exodus out of Egypt: "The lightnings lit up the world; the earth trembled and shook... You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron. (Psalm 77:18, 20)" The sons of Korah describe the glory of God's dwelling place and the revelation of his Christ: "How lovely are your tabernacles, O LORD of hosts... Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of your Christ. (Psalm 84:1, 9)" Asaph describes the glory, which would pass away, as Jeremiah prophesied (Jer 23:7-8), "'Therefore, behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'that they shall no longer say, "As the Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt," but, "As the Lord lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them." And they shall dwell in their own land.'" The sons of Korah describe the glory of Christ, who would finally be revealed in the incarnate Son of God, the light of the nations.

Moses and Elijah stood with Jesus, the incarnate Word, on the mountain while his divine glory shone through him. John, having witnessed it, records (John 1:14), "We beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Thus the sons of Korah prophesy, "The LORD will give grace and glory." This is the glory merely reflected on Moses' face. The fire, which bore witness against the prophets of Baal by burning Elijah's sacrifice, was a shadow of the fire Christ would bring to the earth, the fire of his suffering and death. This is why he told his disciples not to tell anyone about it until he had risen from the dead. The old has passed away, and the new has come. The sacrifices, which testified against the unbelief of the nations, have given way to the Light

of the nations. Christ's glory has arrived, as he has led his people like a flock in the exodus from sin to righteousness through the sea of his own blood.

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Tuesday - Old Testament Lesson (Exodus 34:29-35)

Read Exodus 34.

Our Old Testament lesson from Exodus 34 gives some important background for our the Transfiguration of our Lord. After the people of Israel broke their covenant with God by worshiping a golden calf, God sent Moses down Mount Sinai with two new tablets of commandments to replace the first two that Moses had destroyed. Moses destroyed the tablets of stone when he had seen the idolatry of the people of Israel. Now, with new tablets, with God declaring his mercy and compassion, Moses comes down from the mountain. But this time his face is shining with the glory of God. This is terrifying to the people. As Moses brings the law, the glory of God reflecting from his face is a pronouncement of death to those who are guilty.

But now, with Christ, the glory of the Lord does more than merely reflect off of his face. He shines through, revealing him to be the very Son of God in the flesh. He is God of God, light of light. And now, with his face shining, his disciples are terrified to hear the voice of God. Moses was not able to make atonement for the people. He could only give directions for outward washings and outward sacrifices of animals. Moses was not able to turn God's full wrath away. He could only cover his face when the glory of God reflected off of it. But Jesus, who gave himself as a perfect sacrifice to cleanse our hearts from sin, does more than just cover up God's glory. Certainly, he hides it under the form of a servant. But this is only so that he might bring about the fullness of God's glory by saving sinners through his death and resurrection. As Moses came down from Mount Sinai to deliver the law, so Jesus ascended to Mount Calvary to fulfill the law for every sinner. Having taken away our sin and guilt, he has granted to us to see him face to face in his glory and not be put to shame.

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Wednesday - Gradual (Psalm 45:2; 110:1)

Read Psalm 45 & 110.

Our *Gradual* is from Psalm 45 and Psalm 110. These are both great songs about the coming Messiah, which describe his great majesty.

Psalm 110 is written by David who describes the coming Lord who would be born of his line. This is the Lord to whom the LORD said, "Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool." Psalm 45 also describes the great majesty of this coming King. This is as Nathan prophesied to David about the Son who would be born of his line to build God an everlasting temple, and whose kingdom would last forever (2 Sam 7:16). "I will be his Father and he will be my Son," is what God says to David (2 Sam 7:14). Of course, we know that David had other sons. Of course we know that Solomon built a temple for God, and his kingdom extended. But this temple and kingdom were only shadows, only types, connected to the law of Moses, which anticipated the true Son described in Nathan's prophecy. And Psalm 45 describes this in much detail. This true Son is much fairer than the sons of men. He is God himself. As the same Psalmist also says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness more than Your companions." This anointed one, anointed by God, is God himself. He is the eternal Son of God, begotten of the Father, just as Psalm 2:7 also says, "I will tell of the decree. The Lord said to me, "You are my Son. Today I have begotten you."

This divine majesty, described by the Psalms and the prophets, is the very majesty revealed in Jesus to Peter, James, and John on the mount of Transfiguration. Jesus was transfigured in order to show them that he is God. But he would hide this majesty publicly until he had completed his task of humility under the law, suffering and dying to save sinners. This is why he told his disciples not to tell anyone until he had risen from the dead. Yet now we enjoy the fullness of this majesty in his gospel. Thanks be to God!

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Thursday - Epistle (2 Peter 1:16-21)

Read 2 Peter 1.

Jesus was revealed as true God on the Mount of Transfiguration. His figure was transformed to show Peter, James, and John that he is indeed the eternal Son of God who has assumed for himself flesh and blood. And he did this so that we would listen to his Word. God interrupted Peter's well-meaning comments, telling the disciples to hear Christ. He declares the eternal decree recorded in Psalm 2 and fulfilled at Christ's baptism: "This is my beloved Son. Hear him!" Just as Moses foretold

(Deut 18:15), it is him you shall hear. So the entire purpose of Jesus revealing his divinity and eternal Sonship from the Father is so that we would hear his Word.

Jesus did not reveal his divinity to entertain anyone. We see this in the fact that he only brought three of his disciples on the mountain with him. He was rather teaching his disciples that his Word is eternal. His Word is divine. Therefore, as St. Peter says, we have something more sure, the prophetic Word -- the Scriptures. So while Jesus will certainly appear on the last day with all his glory, and all knees will bend and every tongue will confess (Phil 2:10-11), his will, in the meantime, is that we listen to his Word through the prophets and apostles. Just as Moses and Elijah bore witness to him with all the prophets (Acts 10:43), so do his apostles bear witness (John 15:27). People often try to find God's almighty power through any other means than through his written Word. Whether it is by their own spiritual feelings or a worship environment created by soul-stirring music, folks try to give themselves a taste of Christ's majesty. But Jesus teaches us that the power of God is found in the words of the prophets and apostles, hidden under the preaching of his cross. This is the power that was spoken on high by the Father, the power of the crucified and risen Son of Man. It is the power of salvation from sin and death to all who believe (Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:18).

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Friday - Alleluia (Psalm 96:2-3)

Read Psalm 96.

Our *Alleluia* verse comes from Psalm 96, a Psalm of singing. "Sing to the Lord a new song," is how it begins. And this song is one that reaches all people and stays with us from day to day. So we sing, "Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples. Alleluia." On Transfiguration Sunday we learn about Jesus showing the full splendor of his majesty to his disciples. And the purpose of showing this to them was so that they would be his witnesses after he had died for the sins of the world and risen from the dead. He told them not to tell anyone about it until all of this took place. But it was his intention that they would ultimately declare his majesty. We have this majesty with us today on account of this. We have it every day. So we sing of it. The majesty of Christ is not simply the blinding light of his divinity. No, he deliberately wanted us to know his divine nature as that which brings salvation. This is why he told his disciples to wait until he had accomplished that salvation before they told anyone. So the Psalm doesn't only say,

"Proclaim that he is God from day to day." It says, "Proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day." Because he is God, this salvation has the power to remain with us daily. But that is what it is. It is salvation. And it is ours continually.

St. John says that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory (John 1:14). John was with Peter and James on the mountain when Jesus revealed this glory in full. He beheld the fullness of God. But when he records it, what does he say about it? He calls it the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. God's glory is not some hidden, sovereign decision the Father makes in himself. It is revealed fully in his Son. He is therefore glorified when he accomplishes this salvation for sinners. Jesus was raised by the glory of the Father (Rom 6:4). And this gift is now ours in our baptism. So when we sing of God's glory, we sing of his salvation whereby he justifies poor sinners by the blood of his eternal, beloved Son.

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Saturday - Gospel (Matthew 17:1-9)

Read Matthew 17.

In Jesus' Transfiguration he reveals himself to be true God. He is the Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God. He is the source of all things, and yet he is also true man united in his eternal person. It is just as St. Paul says in Colossians chapter 1:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. (Colossians 1:15-20)

Jesus' divinity was revealed to Peter, James, and John, not in order to show off, but to reveal himself as the God of the prophets. He is the God who sent Moses and Elijah to point toward his coming Salvation -- he coming Exodus that he would accomplish in Jerusalem by his suffering and death (Luke 9:31). This is why Moses said to the Israelites: "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among

you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— (Deut 18:15)." Therefore the Father, interrupting Peter's speech, says, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear him!" This is the Prophet foretold by Moses. So listen to him! Listen to Jesus who says that he will die and rise (Mark 9:9-12), who, by his divine power, reconciles the world to himself by the blood of his cross.

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How Lovely Shines the Morning Star

Rev. 22: 16

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern

Philipp Nicolai, 1597

Tr., composite

8. 8. 7. 8. 8. 7. 4. 4. 4. 4. 8.

Wie schön leuchtet

Philipp Nicolai, 1599

1 How love-ly shines the Morning Star! The na-tions see and hail a - far
 2 O high-est joy by mor-tals won, True Son of God and Ma-ry's Son,
 3 Now rich-ly to my wait-ing heart, O Thou, my God, deign to im-part

The light in Ju-dah shin - ing. Thou Da-vid's Son of Ja-cob's race,
 Thou high-born King of a - ges! Thou art my heart's most beauteous Flow'r,
 The grace of love un-dy - ing. In Thy blest bod-y let me be,

My Bridegroom and my King of Grace, For Thee my heart is pin - ing.
 And Thy blest Gospel's sav-ing pow'r My rap-tured soul en-gag - es.
 E'en as the branch is in the tree, Thy life my life sup-ply - ing.

Low - ly, Ho - ly, Great and glorious, Thou victorious Prince of grac-es,
 Thou mine, I Thine; Sing ho-san-na! Heav'nly manna Tasting, eat-ing,
 Sigh-ing, Cry-ing, For the sa-vor Of Thy fa-vor; Rest-ing nev-er

Fill - ing all the heav'n-ly plac - es.
 Whilst Thy love in songs re - peat - ing.
 Till I rest in Thee for - ev - er. A - men.

4 A pledge of peace from God I see
 When Thy pure eyes are turned to me
 To show me Thy good pleasure.
 Jesus, Thy Spirit and Thy Word,
 Thy body and Thy blood, afford
 My soul its dearest treasure.
 Keep me Kindly
 In Thy favor, O my Savior!
 Thou wilt cheer me;
 Thy Word calls me to draw near Thee.

5 Thou, mighty Father, in Thy Son
 Didst love me ere Thou hadst begun
 This ancient world's foundation.
 Thy Son hath made a friend of me,
 And when in spirit Him I see,
 I joy in tribulation.
 What bliss Is this!
 He that liveth To me giveth
 Life forever;
 Nothing me from Him can sever.

6 Lift up the voice and strike the string,
 Let all glad sounds of music ring
 In God's high praises blended.
 Christ will be with me all the way,
 Today, tomorrow, every day,
 Till traveling days be ended.
 Sing out, Ring out
 Triumph glorious, O victorious,
 Chosen nation;
 Praise the God of your salvation.

7 Oh, joy to know that Thou, my Friend,
 Art Lord, Beginning without end,
 The First and Last, Eternal!
 And Thou at length—O glorious grace!—
 Wilt take me to that holy place,
 The home of joys supernal.
 Amen, Amen!
 Come and meet me! Quickly greet me!
 With deep yearning,
 Lord, I look for Thy returning.