

Devotions for the Week of the Festival of Transfiguration, February 16-20, 2026

Monday of Transfiguration – Prayer of the Week

O God, by the glorious transfiguration of Your beloved Son You confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah. In that voice that came from the bright cloud You wonderfully foreshadowed our adoption by grace. Mercifully make us co-heirs with the King in His glory and bring us to the fullness of our inheritance in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

The man, fellow I know who told me this story, saw a familiar face at the gathering and noticed an empty seat at the table, so he sat there, near this individual whom he knew. He had known this man for some time. The gathering was a celebration, an annual affair where the local community honored a man or woman who had made significant contributions to the welfare of that place. It was always a revelation who it would be, and the speaker always played it up a little. One never knew who the honoree was prior to the committee revealing it at this dinner. Everyone always came wondering who the “man or woman of the year” would be.

The big moment came, they described the significant contribution of this man to the community. He had helped youth and adults. He had served on committees and volunteered many hundreds of hours. Then the name was announced – it was this fellow he had seen across the room. He thought he had known him. He thought he was a good fellow who did a few things, but he had no idea all that this man had been doing in the community. He watched in stunned amazement as the recipient of the award made his way to the podium to accept his award.

This week God has revealed for us that the humble carpenter and itinerant preacher of Nazareth is none other than the Lord of the Universe, the Creator of everything, the Beloved Son of God. Does it surprise you? Probably not. You have grown accustomed to this message. That in itself is a good thing too. It is good to know this story so well. But there is also merit to being surprised by this anew, to having this stunning announcement stun us once more.

On a mountain, before three of Jesus’ disciples, God revealed Jesus for who he has always been and will always be, the glorious Son of God, brilliant and filled with light. He is attended to by famous prophets and angels alike. He is a very big deal indeed. Remember that as we had forward from this week into the season of Lent and Holy Week. Remember that when he hangs dead and crushed on that cross. Remember that as they lay Him in the tomb and He is so very dead. Remember who it is who has given Himself for you.

Tuesday of Transfiguration – Exodus 24:8-18

⁸ And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

⁹ Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up,
¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. ¹¹ And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.

¹² The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.” ¹³ So Moses rose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. ¹⁴ And he said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you. Whoever has a dispute, let him go to them.”

¹⁵ Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶ The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. ¹⁷ Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. ¹⁸ Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

In 1858, Ulysses Grant was a failed farmer. He was reduced to cutting firewood and selling it on the street corners of St. Louis to buy necessities for his family. The outbreak of the Civil war changed all that. A graduate of West Point, he was soon promoted and leading troops, successfully. By the end of the war, Lincoln had put him in command of all the armies of the Union. By the next presidential election, he was sitting in the White House as President of the United States. After he left office, he became the first President ever to circumnavigate the globe.

The high point of that trip might have been his dinner with Queen Victoria of England. It was pretty hard to imagine that a man who had been selling firewood on the street corner in St. Louis just a few years earlier would receive a dinner invitation from the queen. By all accounts he was a rather taciturn dinner guest. One fellow said Grant was able to be silent in several languages. Not the usual characteristic of those who attain the highest office.

As hard as Grant’s dinner with the queen to imagine, is pales when compared to the events which Moses records in this passage. The elders of Israel, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu were invited upon the mountain to dine with God. They saw the God of Israel, they ate, and they drank, but they did not die. I wonder what they ate. Moses does not tell us. I love the detail that Moses puts in here, though. The pavement under God’s feet was like sapphire stone, clear as heaven. It is as if that is as close as they can get to describing that sight. They can describe the flooring. Pavement of sapphire stone is probably not something you can pick up at Home Depot.

All this of course is preceded by an important statement. Moses took the blood of a sacrifice and threw it on the people. It is only then that they ascend the mountain. The day comes when we shall see this sight, the One who stands on that pavement. Our eyes shall behold Him, and we too shall live. For we are also washed in blood, the blood of the Lamb, the One who stands on that sapphire pavement, clear as heaven.

Wednesday of Transfiguration – Psalm 2:6-12

⁶“As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill.”

⁷I will tell of the decree:
The LORD said to me, “You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.

⁸Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.

⁹You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”

¹⁰Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.

¹¹Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.

¹²Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.

“Jesus should have struck him dead for disobedience!” I read those words in a paper submitted by one of my undergraduate students some years ago. He was writing about the story in Mark 2 in which Jesus heals a leper, tells the man not to tell anyone about it, but the man goes out and tells everyone. This creates a problem for Jesus in that he can no longer go into the towns because so many people throng around him. It means that His preaching had to take place in the countryside, making Him far less accessible to the lame, blind, and invalids.

The line really jumped out at me at the time. My first reaction was to say, “No, of course not, this is Jesus we are talking about here.” But then, upon further reflection, I realized that this young man had noticed something which had eluded me in prior readings of this passage. I think we have gotten a little too familiar with Jesus sometimes. I like the old hymn, “What a Friend We Have in Jesus,” but I wonder if we have not internalized the message too much.

The Psalm reminds us that Jesus is God, he breaks the nations with an iron rod and dashes them to pieces like a potter's vessel. Kings and the powerful of the earth are urged to kiss the Son, lest He be angry and we perish in the way. Our Christian faith holds this strange even terrible tension about Jesus. The Gospels tell us many stories of Jesus' tenderness. He takes a little dead girl by the hand and calls her gently back to life. He sees the widow of Nain burying her only son and He has compassion upon her. John calls himself the disciple whom Jesus loved. Yet, we cannot forget this other truth about Him. He is the Lord of all. Almighty power is held in his perforated hands. We must count on those wounds for our salvation when we stand before Him.

You read these words on Ash Wednesday. It is a time to repent before the Judge of us all. It is time to put on ashes and remember just Who is it we pray to.

Thursday of Transfiguration – II Peter 1:16-21

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” ¹⁸ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹ And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

There is something about being a witness to events. I don’t know that I have ever witnessed anything particularly dramatic in my lifetime. I knew a woman who had been in Honolulu when Japanese planes struck Pearl Harbor and saw them wreaking havoc on the US Navy. I know someone who saw the planes fly into the twin towers on 9/11. I know another man who attended the Ice Bowl, an infamous Green Bay Packer game where the temperatures fell to a negative 18 degrees by the end of the game. He is a Packer fan, so I imagine it was even colder for the Cowboys fans whose team lost the NFC championship that day.

Nothing anyone has ever seen compares with what Peter, James, and John saw on that mountain when Jesus was transformed. Elijah and Moses came spoke to Him. I imagine that Peter recounted that story many times after the resurrection of our Lord. He probably worked it into his sermons regularly. Or do you suppose he preferred the story of jumping in the lake to meet the resurrected Jesus? Perhaps he recounted the story of the day Jesus fed the multitudes. Peter had a deep reservoir of stories he could tell, the many things that he had seen.

But today he wants us to see this event through his eyes and hear that voice through his ears and his conclusion is important. Jesus is the fulfillment of all the promises of the Old Testament. They have and will all come to fruition in Jesus. This is so because Jesus is God’s beloved Son. Peter heard that voice. Listen to the witness tell you what he saw and heard. Believe him.

Friday of Transfiguration – Matthew 17:1-9

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. ³ And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁵ He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with

whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified.⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.”⁸ And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.”

Have you ever wondered why it was that Moses and Elijah showed up to talk to Jesus? Theologians ask questions like this. Why not David or Isaiah or even Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? I think it is for a very good reason and that reason is that they are not dead. This is clearly the case for Elijah. He was taken up into heaven in a whirlwind in II Kings 2. Moses is a little more complicated. It does say that he “died” at the end of Deuteronomy, but when you get into the details, things get a little odd. He climbed the mountain, and Deuteronomy simply says that God buried him, and no one ever found his tomb up there. It could be that he died there. But I think, because he is standing here by Elijah, that Deuteronomy reflects the pious conjecture of those who wrote the final chapter of that book. He was really old, he climbed a mountain and never came back down. He must have died up there.

I think God took both Moses and Elijah because he wanted them to stand here, centuries later, that they could have this conversation with Jesus. Jesus is heading to Jerusalem. He dies for the sins of the world there. From this mountain the narrative of Jesus life rushes headlong into the events of Holy Week. Moses had written about a seed of Adam and Eve who would liberate us from Satan’s bondage, but it would come at a cost. Elijah had proclaimed God’s judgment and mercy. I think Jesus, remember He is both fully human and fully divine, needed this conversation, a pep-talk from these ancient men.

I also think Peter, James, John, and you and I needed to see this shining Jesus engaged in this conversation. We see it through their eyes and behold what Jesus really is. His face shone like the sun and his clothes were as white as light itself. We also need to peel the wrapping back a little to behold the Jesus who is yet to be seen by us. The day comes when we will behold this Jesus. John tells us we will be able to see Him as He is, because we will be like Him. See this Jesus through the eyes of Peter, James, and John and marvel at what God is doing to you.