



Dear Friend of the Missions,

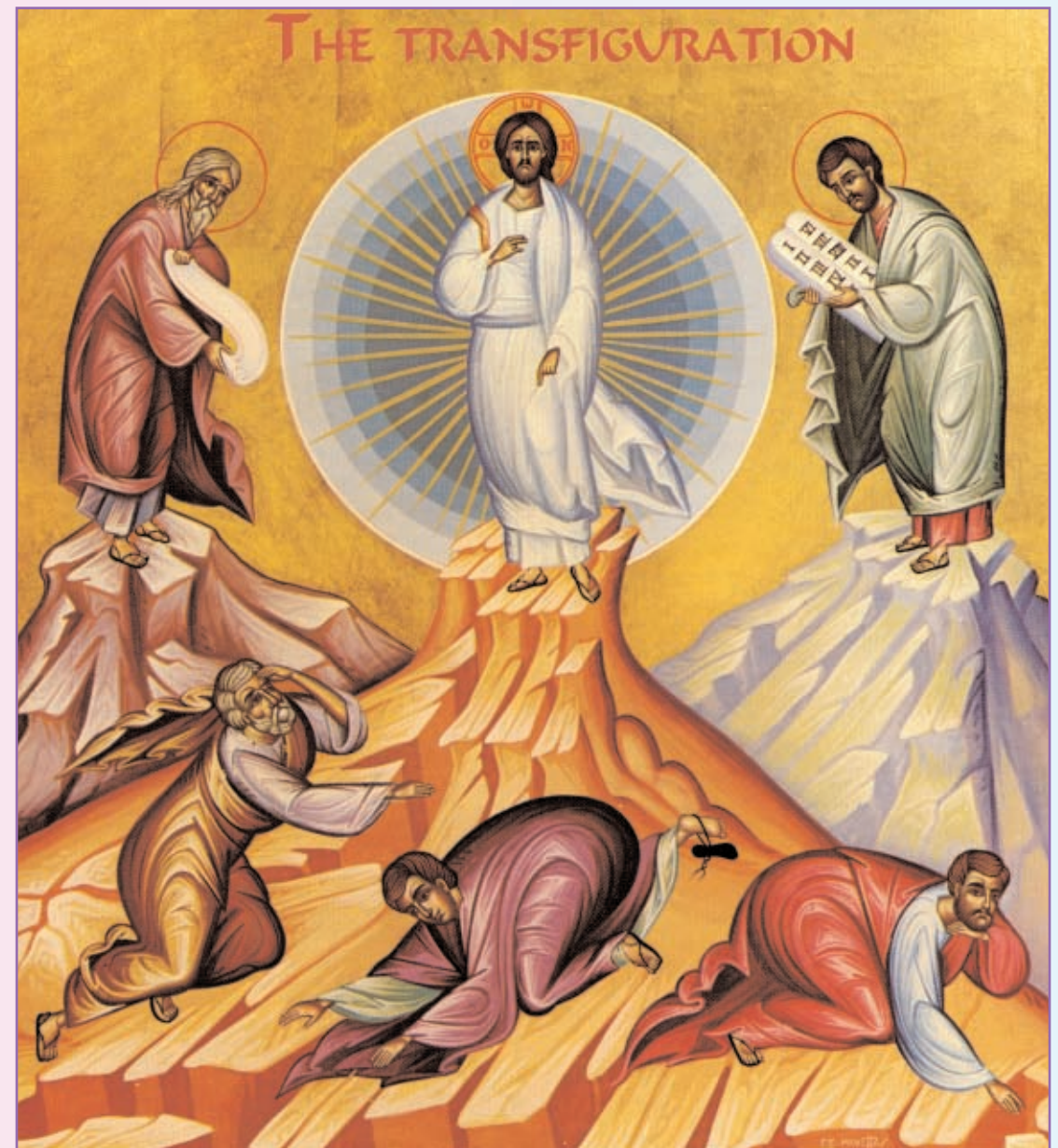
I hope that summer has been a peaceful time so far, and that August will provide you with a lot of rest. There are some important feasts to remember this month: August 6 is the Transfiguration of the Lord; August 8 is the feast of St. Dominic; August 11 is the feast of St. Clare. The Solemnity of the Assumption is August 15. There is a wonderful tradition of blessing flowers on that day. Along with the meditation you will find the blessing of the flowers. The octave of the Assumption (Aug 22) is the feast of the Queenship of Mary. Perhaps on August 23, the feast of St. Rose of Lima, you could pray especially for our mission in Peru. Please pray for peace, it seems so elusive; pray also for all the victims of war as we remember the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Thank you again for all your generosity and prayers. You make a big difference in the lives of many people. God bless you!



The A-bomb Dome is the ruins of the former Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall destroyed by the the world's first A-bomb on August 6, 1945. Hiroshima Japan

The Transfiguration

By Fr. Russell Becker, OFM



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Before your crucifixion, O Lord, having taken your disciples to a high mountain, you were transfigured before them, dazzling them with rays of power; wanting to show them the radiance of the resurrection, both for your love for humanity, and for the sake of your might. Give us the same peace, O God, for you are merciful, and you love all your people. [Byzantine Hymn for the Feast]



From as early as the fifth century in East Syria, the feast of the Transfiguration was celebrated (as a festival of Christ the King). Over the centuries it spread to the West, especially when interest in the Holy Land and the sites connected with the life of Jesus was high. The feast was taken into the universal calendar in 1457 to commemorate the victory over the Turks at Belgrade by St. John

Capistran. As it is celebrated today, the feast recalls that *Jesus revealed his glory to the disciples in order to prepare them for the scandal of the cross, and gave the Church the hope that one day it would share in his glory* [preface for the feast]. The Tradition has used the mystery of the Transfiguration as an occasion to reflect on various aspects of our faith.

The Person of Christ.

O Christ without beginning, when on the Mount of the Transfiguration your disciples saw the light that was you and your unapproachable divinity, they were rapt with amazement. [Byzantine Hymn] This mystery is an affirmation of the Church's belief in the divinity of Christ. All the miracles of Scriptures served this purpose. Jesus lived here in a poor and lowly condition but, in the mystery of the Transfiguration, we are able to profess with Peter: *Lord we believe. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

It is also an occasion in Scripture where the Mystery of the Trinity is revealed. In the experience, the Father testifies from heaven: *This is my beloved Son..., while the Spirit descends on the Son in the form of a cloud of light* (Luke 9,34). *Today on Tabor in the manifestation of your light, O Lord, light unaltered from the light of the unbegotten Father, we have seen the Father as Light, and the Spirit as light, guiding with light the whole of creation.* [Byzantine hymn]

The Transformation of the World. *He, who once spoke through symbols to Moses on Mount Sinai, was transfigured before the disciples; and in his own person, he showed them the nature of humanity, arrayed in the original beauty of the image...you have made our human nature to shine again as lightning, transforming it into the glory and splendor of your own divinity.* [Byzantine Hymn]

The feast offers us a glimpse of the Second Coming. At that time, we too will be glorified and, in turn, all of nature. Though suffering from the consequences of sin, all of nature will be freed, renewed and restored, when Christ comes at the end of time. This transformation is suggested to our belief, our hope and our expectation. St. Paul reminds us: *We have our citizenship in heaven; it is from there that we eagerly await the coming of our Savior.. He will give a new form to this lowly body of ours and remake it according to the pattern of his glorified body* [Philippians 3,20-21].



Communion with God in Prayer. In the Tradition of the Church, prayer helps us to achieve communion with God. In contemplation, we have an experience of God that is very intense. Many saints have had this experience, and have tried to describe it. Words fall short in being able to express what has happened.

When the soul is counted worthy to enjoy communion with the Spirit of the Light of God, and when God shines upon her with the beauty of his ineffable glory, preparing her as a throne and dwelling for himself, she becomes all light, all face, all eye; and there is no part of her that is not full of the spiritual eyes of light.

There is no part of her that dwells in a darkness, but she is made wholly, and in every part, light and spirit [Homilies of St. Macarios].

In coming into union with God's grace, power and glory we are able to proclaim that God's life is our life without any confusion. We know and experience God as nearer to us than anyone or anything, and yet we acknowledge God's otherness. Many of the famous mystics of the Church have acknowledged that they have experienced the Light of Mount Tabor: *In mystical contemplation a person sees neither with the intellect nor with the body, but with the Spirit; and with full certainty*

he knows that he beholds supernaturally a light which surpasses all other light [St. Gregory Palamas]. This is a fitting goal for our prayer. Prayer helps to lift the whole body to the level where all is subordinated to the one aim of centering all of our attention upon God. It is in this sense that the world is sought and known in the beauty of God, not God in the beauty of the world.

Pope St. Leo the Great spoke these words about this mystery: *The primary purpose of the transfiguration in the mind of Jesus was this: that his disciples should not take offense when he would die on the Cross, nor that the humil-*

iation of the passion he so freely embraced should shatter their faith; for the majesty of his hidden dignity had previously been manifested to them. Nevertheless, the Lord is no less mindful of his holy Church; for by that same act, he sought to flood her with hope in the transfiguration of the whole Mystical Body; because the glorification of the Head must some day beam forth unto the glorification of every member.

Lord, let us walk in the light of your countenance. Let us rejoice in your name for ever!
[Byzantine Hymn]

Questions for Reflection:

- 1. Do you work some contemplative time into the rhythm of your week?*
- 2. Have you had any Mount Tabor experiences? Have you shared them with others for encouragement? Has a sense of the beauty of God helped you to see more clearly the beauty of the world, especially of God's people?*
- 3. Do you trust in the promise that we shall become like God in the mystery of Jesus Christ?*

*Please also pray for our missionaries
on their birthdays:*

Bishop Benedict Coscia, O.F.M. (Brazil): August 10
Fr. David Hyman, O.F.M. (Southern U.S.): August 22
Fr. Aloysius Siracuse, O.F.M. (Brazil): August 30

May God give them
many years of health,
peace and energy!

*Also remember our missionaries and
former missionary friars who are ill:*

Fr. Champion Lally, O.F.M. (Japan)
Fr. Clement Healy, O.F.M. (Jamaica)
Fr. Thomas Fox, O.F.M. (Brazil)
Fr. Finian Riley, O.F.M. (Africa)
Fr. Robert Nee, O.F.M. (Brazil)

May God grant
them health and peace!

Br. Declan McCabe
1930-2006

Brother Declan McCabe, OFM, 75, a professed Franciscan friar for 49 years, died on July 20 at St. Anthony Hospital, St. Petersburg, Fla.

Declan was born on Aug. 29, 1930 in Brockton, Mass., to James and Mary (née Allen) McCabe. He was baptized William on Sept. 11 in St. Edward's Church, Brockton. He attended the Howard School in Brockton, Brockton High School for three years, and then graduated in 1953 from Newman Prep in Boston.

On Feb. 14, 1954, Declan entered the training program for Franciscan lay brothers at St. Stephen's in Croghan, N.Y., where he learned various trades. On Jan. 24, 1956, he was received into the Franciscan Order at St. Raphael's



Novitiate, Lafayette, N.J., and on Jan. 26, 1960, he professed final vows at St. Anthony Shrine, Boston, before Celsus Wheeler. After repeated

requests over the years to volunteer for the missions, Declan was assigned in July 1976 to the parish of Santísimo Nombre de Jesús in Lima, Peru. There he worked generously and with great dedication to provide care for the poorest residents of the pueblos juvenes, the shantytowns that have grown up on the outskirts of the city of Lima. He established postas medicas (medical and dental clinics), day care centers and soup kitchens to serve the people. In this way, he sought to help heal the effects of malnutrition, cholera, tuberculosis, and the desperation of structural poverty. "As Franciscans," Declan once said, "we should be working with the people who are poor. We should be working by our example."

The Blessing of the flowers

Almighty God,
we praise and glorify you
on the feast of the Assumption
of your daughter, Mary.
She believed in your promise
and enjoys the fullness
of resurrected life.

Bless these flowers,
the first gifts of the harvest.
Through the intercession of Mary
help us to enjoy them
and the beauty they reveal
for our own good
and the good of others,
so that we may praise your goodness
and give you glory.
Loving God, we praise you
through Jesus Christ
your Son and our brother
for ever and ever.