

# THE TRANSFIGURATION

*“Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my son, the Beloved; listen to him! Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus.” (Mark 9:2-8 NRSV)*

**This event is second of the two times (the first being at the Baptism of Jesus) when the voice of God the Father tells those in attendance that Jesus is his beloved Son.**



**When the sanctuary was expanded in 1995/1996 into the traditional cruciform shape, two pairs of double windows were added on the arms of the building – The Commissioning of the Apostles and The Transfiguration.**

**The pair of windows depicting the Transfiguration is colorfully and perceptively illustrated as recorded in the Gospels. The three accounts of this event are found in Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, and Luke 9:28-36. It is also cited in Peter II 1:17-18.**

**The Bible tells us that when Jesus was considering going to Jerusalem, he spoke with his disciples of the torture that was in store for Him and of the end of His life on earth. Jesus wanted His disciples to be prepared for the coming events.**

**Designing the window, the artist used the abundant radiance of yellows and oranges surrounding the Lord and his companions, Elijah (on the left) and Moses (on the right), who represent the Law (Moses) and Prophet (Elijah) of the Old Testament. The artist depicts Jesus in his brilliant state with white garments and the cloud under his feet to attest to his glorified state as he would appear to his apostles after the crucifixion. The**

disciples look on in various states of astonishment. Peter is so awestruck that he turns his head away from the Lord's brilliance. John gazes lovingly at the Lord in rapt admiration. James seems to be glancing away, perhaps in confusion. Symbolically, the appearance of Moses and Elijah represented the Law and the Prophets. But God's voice from heaven – "Listen to Him!" - clearly showed that the Law and the Prophets must give way to Jesus. The One who is the new and living way is replacing the old. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law and the countless prophecies in the Old Testament. Also, His glorified form is meant to strengthen the disciples' faith and at the same time reveal to them in a powerful way the divine hand that is at work in the suffering that Jesus will undergo.

The Transfiguration allowed certain apostles to have a privileged spiritual experience for what they would later face. It was only a temporary event and not meant to be permanent. Likewise, at certain times in our lives, God may give certain members of the faithful (not all of the faithful, all the time), special experiences of his grace to strengthen them. These experiences should be welcomed for the graces they are, but should not be expected to continue indefinitely. Nor should they cause fear or resentment when they stop. They may be meant only as momentary glimpses of the joy of heaven in order to sustain us as we face the trials of life - to help embolden us on the road that will--ultimately--bring us into the infinite and endless joy of heaven.

The Feast of the Transfiguration is referred to as Baydzaragerbootiun, and is one of the five principal feasts of the Armenian Church, so named because of Christ's luminous appearance. In Armenia it is also known as Vartavar (the Festival of Roses) after the old pagan feast, which it replaced. In the Armenian calendar, the feast takes place on the 14th Sunday after Easter—98 days later—so it is movable within an interval of 35 days, from June 28 to August 1. The Orthodox and Catholic churches observe the feast of Transfiguration on a fixed day, August 6.

**Inscription reads:**

**In Memory of Parents Nishan & Mina and Brother George Pinajian by Charles and  
Grace Pinajian**

**Installation during 1995/1996 Expansion of the Sanctuary**

**Commentary by Barbara Hovsepian & Ruth Bedevian**