

The Transfigured Christ and His Church

Matthew 17–18

What We Found

- The Transfiguration is Sinai come back: six days, the mountain, the cloud, the voice, the shining face. But Moses shone with borrowed light; Jesus shines like the sun from within, with the Law and the Prophets standing witness.
- The Father's "listen to him" echoes Deuteronomy 18:15: the prophet like Moses has come, certified from heaven. When the cloud lifts, they see no one but Jesus only.
- Jesus gave his Church a real process for a brother's sin against you: go alone, then two or three witnesses, then tell it to the church. A church you can tell things to is a church you can find, and her binding and loosing is ratified in heaven.
- What Peter received alone in Matthew 16 (the rock, the keys, the new name) is never repeated; what is shared in 18:18 is truly shared. Neither a headless college nor a head without a body: a college with a head.
- Where two or three are gathered in his name, he is in the midst of them: a promise only God can make, and a bell we have heard ringing since chapter 1.
- Ten thousand talents forgiven; a hundred denarii choked out of a fellow servant. Forgiveness from the heart is the family resemblance of the forgiven.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. Leo the Great (Sermon on the Transfiguration)

The Transfiguration removed the scandal of the cross in advance: the chosen witnesses saw the glory the crucified One possesses by right, so that what shone in the Head might be hoped for by the members.

Voices of the Church: St. Ignatius of Antioch (Letter to the Smyrnaeans)

Writing around the year 107 on his way to martyrdom, Ignatius already describes a visible, gathered, ordered Church: where the bishop appears, there let the people be, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.

Voices of the Church: St. John Chrysostom (Homilies on Matthew)

Nothing we forgive one another compares with what God has forgiven us: a hundred coins against ten thousand talents. Mercy received and not passed on curdles into a worse debt than the first.

Live It This Week

- Name your ten thousand talents in prayer once this week: say out loud what God has actually forgiven you.
- Take one step of Matthew 18:15: one direct, private, gentle conversation you have been outsourcing to resentment.
- Before your group or family gathers this week, pray verse 20 and mean it: Lord, be in the midst of us.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 18:20 (RSV2CE): *“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 19–20.

Catechism References

CCC 554–556 · CCC 1443–1445 · CCC 881 · CCC 2843