



The Holy See

MASS ON THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II

Monday, 6 August 2001

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

For us at Castel Gandolfo, today's Solemnity of the Transfiguration has had an intimate and familiar tone ever since my unforgettable Predecessor, the Servant of God Paul VI, died here in this Apostolic Palace 23 years ago. While the liturgy was inviting contemplation of the transfigured Christ, he ended his earthly pilgrimage and entered into eternity, where the holy face of God shines in its full splendour. This day is therefore linked to his memory, which is enveloped in the special mystery of light that radiates from this Solemnity.

The venerable Pontiff also liked to stress another aspect of the mystery of the Transfiguration, the "ecclesial" one. He never missed an opportunity to point out that the Church, the Body of Christ, participates through grace in the very mystery of her Head.

"I wish", the Holy Father said, "you were able to glimpse in the Church the light she bears within herself, to see the Church transfigured, to see, that is, what the Council set out so clearly in its documents", "The Church", he added, "contains ... a deep, immense and divine mystery.... The Church is the sacrament, the tangible sign of a hidden reality, that is the presence of God among us" (*L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 9 March 1972, p. 4).

These words reveal his extraordinary love for the Church. She was the great passion of his whole life! May God grant each one of us to serve faithfully, as he did, the Church, which today is called to a new and courageous evangelization.

This is what we will ask the Lord during this Holy Eucharist, through the intercession of Mary,

Mother of the Church and Star of the New Evangelization.

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