

HOMILY FOR THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION  
SUNDAY, AUGUST 6, 2006  
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Introduction

First a few theological words, then the applications.

In all three readings we have references to the feast we celebrate today. First there is the Prophet Daniel's vision of the "Ancient One" and the Son in glory. Then St. Peter's letter reminds us of the words heard at the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor "This is my Beloved Son". And finally, the Gospel is St. Mark's account of the remarkable event where Jesus shows himself to his disciples in all his glory.

I A theologian of the early Church claimed that the Transfiguration was all about Jesus' humanity – about this man who was Godlike. It's an interesting view of this event on Mount Tabor and relevant for us. We also are humans who are made in God's image and called to be a likeness of God in this world. What is more, we are incorporated into the Person of Christ, like branches on a vine, part of His Mystical Body, one with Him as He is one with the Father. This is an incredibly high and sublime destiny for us humans.

II The incredible application flowing from all of this is that we celebrate Jesus' Transfiguration and our's precisely on August 6<sup>th</sup>, the very day when we commemorate the bombing of Hiroshima with a nuclear weapon.

This juxtaposition is truly a Cosmic Paradox: we have the capability of a transcendent destiny and the capability of transcendent destruction.

Conclusion

Let me conclude this stark paradox by relating in some detail an event which took place in the living room of our Assisi Community this past Monday evening. Three Japanese Catholics, a bishop, a sister and a deacon, shared Eucharist and dinner with us, and inevitably our conversation came around to Hiroshima and Nagasaki and that "9/11" when 140,000 civilians were killed (with another 140,000 dying within a year after the bombing). Our Japanese guests did not dwell on that sad history, however, but looked forward to a time of "never again".

Actually, the reason for these Japanese Catholics' visit to Washington is to prepare a campaign here that America not pressure the Japanese to change Article 9 of their Constitution. That article, written by the U.S. military occupation forces in Japan after World War II says: "Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized".

Now sixty years later the United States wants Japan to abrogate that remarkable statement of purpose for our current geo-political interests.

At a moment when it is said that using weapons of mass destruction (WMD) – read nuclear weapons – is openly discussed in the halls of the Pentagon and elsewhere, we must say with all our power ‘NOT IN MY NAME’.