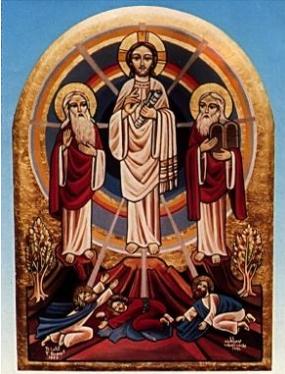


The TRANSFIGURATION – AUGUST 6th



The story of the transfiguration is told in all of the first three Gospels. Jesus takes three of his disciples, Peter, James and John, apart from the others up a mountain. There he is transfigured to show the radiance of God – *the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning* (Luke 9:29). Jesus is joined by Moses and Elijah, placing him in the traditions of both the Law and the Prophets.

Obviously this is not an easy subject to paint. The icon shown here conveys the glory largely through

the awe of the disciples, while the very early fourteenth century painting by Duccio de Buoninsegna to be found in the National Gallery in London relies on its richly gilded background.



Perhaps the most successful attempt to capture the radiance of the transfigured Christ is the mid fifteenth century painting by Fra Angelico, to be found in San Marco, Florence.



The Transfiguration was the subject of the last ever painting of the great master Raphael, who died in 1520.

In this painting, we see not only the Transfiguration, but also the scene that awaits Jesus when he descends from the mountain. In all three Gospels, the Transfiguration is immediately followed by Jesus healing a boy afflicted by an evil spirit. In Raphael's picture the disciples attempt a cure without success.

By showing both the Transfiguration and what is to be come, Raphael tells us that we cannot stay on the mountain for ever, but return to the world and its suffering, enriched and ready to do God's work.

