



# HAIL

REFLECTIONS ON THE  
MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

# MARY

BR MARK O'CONNOR FMS

*Marist*  
ASSOCIATION OF  
ST MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT

## THE DEAREST FRESHNESS DEEP DOWN THINGS

We live in a post-Enlightenment time in which many of us (at least in the so-called 'developed' West) have undergone what sociologist Max Weber refers to as the 'disenchantment' of the world.

As a result we have lost a sense of wonder, a sense of 'enchantment' at the possibilities present in creation.

We Christians, however, worship a God that took on the material (incarnation), we have within our Gospel formation the potential to appreciate what the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins called the 'dearest freshness deep down things'.

The Transfiguration reminds us of this 'freshness'—of God's divine, enchanting presence shining all around us.

So, what exactly happened on the mountain of Tabor? The uncreated Light, the Cloud of Unknowing, the overwhelming fear, the desire to cling to the moment—all these suggest the classic experience of an encounter with the Holy, with the Divine. Whatever else might be said, the disciples came face to face with the mystery of God in Jesus Christ.

And what was their reaction? In the accounts of Christ's Transfiguration we are told that Peter offers to make three dwellings: one each for Christ, Moses and Elijah, whom Peter, John and James have witnessed, gathered on top of the mount. It is easy for us to sneer at the naiveté of Peter's request: 'Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah ...'

Peter signifies all of us, as we try vainly to capture and control our experience of Jesus. All disciples are sent down the mountain—on 'mission'—to 'see' the Lord amidst his people.

There is a wonderful story told by Trappist monk Thomas Merton about a profound experience he had of this very thing. He wrote that on 18 March 1958 he was standing at a street corner in downtown Louisville. It was an ordinary

day and ordinary people were going about their business. But as he looked at them they suddenly changed.

He wrote: 'I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realisation that I loved these people ... I saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the person that each one is in God's eyes. To me, they seemed to be walking around shining like the sun.'

He went on to wonder what the world would be like if we could all see each other as we really are. He muses: 'I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and worship each other!' (*Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*)

Perhaps Merton had very special moments of ecstatic visions, of seeing as on Mount Tabor, in his solitude. But his Louisville epiphany reminds that we 'ordinary mystics' are called to see Jesus transfigured in unlikely places and in unlikely people. 'Because the Holy Ghost over the bent world broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.'

### GOD'S GRANDEUR

*The world is charged with the grandeur of God*

...

*Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared  
with toil;  
And wears man's smudge and shares man's  
smell; the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.  
And for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down  
things;  
And though the last lights off the black West  
went  
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward,  
springs—  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah!  
bright wings.*

—Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ (1877)

*Transfiguration* (2010)  
by Susan Tilt





## *Ponder...*

Can you recall a time in your own faith journey when you have come 'face to face' with the mystery of Jesus? Perhaps in a time of personal prayer or at a significant liturgical celebration (Christmas/ Easter, Sacramental, Requiem) or perhaps in a 'one on one' encounter with another human being. Recall and savour the 'enchantment' of the experience.

'What would the world look like if we could all see each other as we really are?' i.e. the way God sees each one of us. Try intentionally doing this for a day and reflect on the outcome. How did it challenge you? How did it console you?

As an 'ordinary mystic', in which unlikely people and unlikely places do you see Jesus transfigured ('the divine shining presence of God')? Are you ever one of the unlikely? When? How?



# IF YOU WANT

If you want, the Virgin will come walking down the road  
pregnant with the holy, and say,  
"I need shelter for the night,  
please take me inside your heart, my time is so close."  
Then, under the roof of your soul,  
you will witness the sublime intimacy,  
the divine, the Christ, taking birth forever,  
as she grasps your hand for help,  
for each of us is the midwife of God, each of us.  
Yes there, under the dome of your being  
does creation come into existence eternally,  
through your womb, dear pilgrim – the sacred womb of your soul,  
as God grasps our arms for help:  
for each of us is his beloved servant, never far.  
If you want, the Virgin will come walking down the street  
pregnant with Light and sing.

*—St John of the Cross*