



**S**art of Last Rites in the Catholic church is the celebration of *Viaticum* or “food for the journey” which is the last communion a person receives before he dies. This liturgy includes a renewal of baptismal promises. Too often, when a Priest is called to someone’s sick bed, that person is already in a comatose state and not able to respond to the questions of the baptismal promises. However, recently, in Anchorage, I have been called a few times early enough for the dying to renew these promises. It has been a profound experience for me!

On this second Sunday of Lent, we always read the Gospel of the Transfiguration. Many of the Fathers of the Church write that one of the purposes of the Transfiguration is to remove the scandal of the Cross. This is very true! However, this year I am also reflecting on the fact that there is a strong link between the Transfiguration and the Baptism of the Lord! Both are examples of a *theophany* or God revealing Himself to us. Both reveal the Trinity. In the Baptism the Holy Spirit is in the form of a dove, and in the Transfiguration it is in the cloud. In both we hear the voice of the Father “this is my beloved Son!” Also, and very importantly, both are at the cusp of a pivotal moment in the Lord’s life – the Baptism right before his public ministry, and the Transfiguration before Palm Sunday and His Passion.

In the Transfiguration, the Lord’s clothing becomes dazzling white! In a few weeks, when we baptize people at the Easter Vigil, they will change their clothes to white robes! Also, when we baptize babies, they are clothed in white! These white robes are a symbol of the purity our souls have in baptism.

Fr. Matthew Wanner told us recently that according to the Syriac tradition, Adam in the garden was not unclothed but was clad in garments of light. He lost this because of sin and had to replace them with clothes of skins. The robe of glory is replaced by dead skins. Sin does this to our souls. The robe of glory fades, and we do not live up to our divine calling.

However, God is rich in mercy! We are called to be saints, and God will give us these graces for continuing conversion of mind and heart!

We are called to wear the robe of glory in heaven. However, we fall short of it all the time because of our sins. This Lent, our prayer, fasting, and almsgiving should be accompanied by at least one if not a few good confessions. We need to radiate the joy of the Gospel in our time! We must live up to those baptismal promises which we have made and will renew again this Easter. When people meet us, can they tell that we desire this robe of glory, thus fulfilling our baptism? Can they tell that we desire to have our souls transfigured? To become saints?

*Siempre Adelante!*