

# Resilience and the Transfiguration

March 1, 2026

Genesis tells us the why of the Transfiguration.

The Transfiguration happened so that Jesus could reveal His glory to the Apostles so they would have the strength to face the scandal of the Cross and understand that it is necessary to pass through many tribulations in order to reach the Kingdom of God.

“Jesus revealed His glory so the disciples could face the scandal of the Cross.”

He Didn't Bring Them Up to Enjoy the View

When I went to the Holy Land and we went up the Mount of Transfiguration, our tour guide, Father Stephen Doyle—a Franciscan biblical scholar—told us:

“Fellas, Jesus did not bring Peter, James, and John up here to pray a retreat and enjoy the view.”

Jesus brought them up there to change their view.

He wanted them to understand that the glory of the Resurrection would only come through the suffering and scandal of the Cross. The Transfiguration was intended to strengthen the disciples for that moment.

“Jesus brought them up the mountain to change their view.”

A Spiritual Word We Don't Use Enough: Resilience

When we talk about being strengthened, I think of a word we do not often use in the spiritual life: Resilience.

When the disciples came down from that mountain, Jesus needed them to be resilient as they made the difficult journey from the mountain of glory to the little hill of Calvary.

Resilience involves the whole person.

Mental Resilience

Jesus needed His disciples to be mentally resilient—mentally tough for what was coming.

They had to embrace the new reality Jesus was introducing. They had to live in that reality and not escape it by creating fantasies of their own.

They also needed to hold on to the kingdom patterns Jesus was preaching and teaching.

### Emotional Resilience

The disciples also needed to be emotionally resilient.

They needed to be in control of their emotions—lest their emotions control them.

How would they respond when people said:  
“I hate you because you are a follower of Jesus Christ.”

Jesus predicted that this would happen. Because they hated Him, they would hate His followers.

The disciples needed emotional stability to endure it.

### Physical Resilience

They also needed to be physically resilient.

They needed strength and stamina.

Jesus taught that the road to heaven is narrow and difficult, and many are not strong enough to take it.

Following Christ requires endurance.

As the comedian Gary Bowman once joked, “The one thing they never tell you about life is that it’s every single day.”

Life can be exhausting. We need stamina and resilience to continue following Jesus.

### Spiritual Resilience

Finally, we need spiritual resilience.

We need the ability to resist temptation and the evil that comes into our lives.

The Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist Viktor Frankl understood how important resilience is to human well-being. Frankl was imprisoned in several Nazi concentration camps.

You may have read his famous book *Man’s Search for Meaning*.

Frankl observed that one of the most important human qualities is resilience—our ability to survive and even thrive in difficult circumstances.

He noticed that those who woke up each morning and asked themselves:  
“What is required of me today in order to survive?”

did much better than those who woke up complaining about how they felt or how they were being mistreated.

The people who had a plan survived.

“The people who had a plan survived.”

Sunday Mass Is the Mountaintop

Every time we gather for Mass on Sunday, we say the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life.

Right now, we are at the summit.

This is the mountaintop of your week.

You are receiving grace through the Word and through the Sacrament.

But soon we will come down off this mountain—like the disciples—and begin our week out in the world.

And we will need resilience.

As Pope Benedict XVI said, the Transfiguration was meant to give the disciples strength to face the scandal of the Cross and understand that it is necessary to pass through many tribulations in order to reach the Kingdom of God.