

2nd Sunday of Lent  
February 28, 2010  
“Transfiguring Our Corner of the World”

In today’s Gospel, my friends, we hear recounted, again, the event of Our Lord’s Transfiguration somewhere on a mountain’s hillside.

Depending on the cycle of Scripture readings we are in, we hear this story 2-3 times a year - certainly on the Feast of the Transfiguration, on August 6.

And while we must always hang on to the Father’s ending words: “This is my chosen Son; listen to Him!”, we remember they are the same words God the Father speaks when Jesus comes out of the River Jordan after being baptized: “This is my beloved Son, hear Him.”

So that’s about as direct a communication from God that we can get to take Christ and what He says and does seriously.

We can, and should, look at the experience of the Transfiguration itself.

In the past, we’ve focused on how Jesus’ appearance changed, and His clothes became dazzling white.

That, of course, is a glimpse of what is the glorified life, or what life will be like with Him in heaven: no more sorrow, no more pain, no more suffering, no more wars, no more terrorism, no more injustices, prejudices, or discrimination, no more unemployment, no more evil or sin.

I’ve heard it said, and I, personally, believe it to be true, that purgatory is that place where we get ourselves all cleaned up from sinful selfishness, so that we’ll feel comfortable in God’s presence with our faces and clothes as white and worthy as were those of Jesus on that mountainside in today’s Gospel.

After all, when we are about to meet some very-important-person in our lives, don’t we insist on being as fixed-up and dressed up as possible? Sure!

And if we’re caught off-guard when that some very-important-person just happens to drop in and catches us in our old work clothes, don’t we feel embarrassed, and a little, or even a lot, uncomfortable? Sure we do!

It’s the same in getting ourselves ready to be with God forever!

So transfiguring or transforming is a good experience, and really, happens all the time.

Perhaps you’ll recall I’ve said in the past: “Life transfigures.”

All of life's experiences, especially the tough ones, the crosses, if we deal with them as Jesus did, they will transform us while we're still here on earth, and before we get to purgatory.

And they are supposed to.

That's why God lets them happen.

That doesn't make Him a mean God.

It's the big way, down here on earth, that we can grow in virtue and become more like Him.

It's how we become more patient, more tolerant, more understanding, more forgiving, and yes, even more loving.

So it's through the illnesses, the deaths of our loved ones, the collapse of marriages or even just friendly relationships, the frustrations of job uncertainty, or even of parenting or just growing up through all the grades in school, it's through all these that one-by-one, the Good Lord God transfigures and transforms us all the more into what He made us to be. Which is not always what we selfishly want ourselves to be.

Now, there's a second dimension to this transfiguring and transforming that goes on in each one of us.

It doesn't just stop with us personally! No!

All the increased patience, tolerance, understanding, forgiveness, and charity that we grow into personally, should spill over into a noticeable change in our corners of the world: at home, at work, in the neighborhood, just wherever else we associate with others.

Starting with the better example we personally set, sorrows and pain should be coped with more spiritually.

Suffering should be offered up as a prayer of adoration to the Father, just as Jesus offered His to the Father, saying: "Thy will be done," and knowing that somehow, someday, someday, God will work all this out, and then offering that prayer of adoration to whatever intentions here on earth we want to pray for.

That way, no cross is ever wasted.

Terrorism and fears about our future safety and security, while we give them full attention, are ultimately left in the hands of God.

Injustices, prejudices, and discriminations, again, are given full efforts to reform, but are consigned to the overpowering leadership of the Holy Spirit at work in the good people who are in place to make good differences.

The same must be said for endlessly frustrating unemployment, evil and sin.

More important than what happens to us personally, or as a community of God's people, is how we handle what happens to us.

And when we allow God to transform and transfigure us in good ways, we become His instruments in transforming and transfiguring others around us into better lives.

And then when we team up with those others, what great good things do happen that bring our corners of the world all the more into an image of God's glory.

The Transfiguration, my friends, Our Lord's , our own, and everybody else's.

Thank you, and God bless you.