



St. Anne
CATHOLIC
COMMUNITY

March 4, 2012

Second Sunday of Lent—Transfiguration

"I will shower blessings on you, I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore...All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants..."—Genesis 22:17-18

"Rabbi," he said "it is wonderful for us to be here..."—Mark 9:5

Dear friends;

There are moments in life when we have a vision and can see clearly our life laid out before us. I have often been told by couples that when they met their spouse they knew, then and there, that they would be spending the rest of their lives with this person. And their lives were wonderfully transformed forever.

Today's readings show us the ecstatic visions of Abraham and the disciples. Abraham wrestles with what God wants Abraham to do. The peoples surrounding Abraham often practiced child sacrifice. They cast their living infants into a furnace to appease their gods. Through Abraham all people will learn that God does not desire human sacrifice. Rather God requires fervent obedience to justice and love. Abraham's faithfulness to this vision will indeed make him and his descendents a blessing to all nations.

Previous to today's passage from Mark the disciples are told by Jesus that he will be going to Jerusalem where he would die. This must have felt like being in a dark, cold and terrifying place. Jesus had come proclaiming that the kingdom of darkness, evil and death was not our true life; this is not the world that God intends; evil, sin and death must be overcome; and he is sent by God to save them from this fearful enslavement to sin and death.

Jesus' transfiguration is a moment when the disciples are shown the gift that is being offered to us. By his self-gift, Jesus offers us a world illuminated by pure love, transformed by the joy of knowing our lives have eternal meaning. We see divine light shining through this man who is humble and homeless, who has no authority over anyone. And only has the power of his vision of our world changed into the Kingdom of God. This man will be crushed but not destroyed for he will be raised.

The important Orthodox priest-theologian Fr Alexander Schmemmann (1921-1983) commenting on Jesus' transfiguration said:

The divine light permeates the entire world. The divine light transfigures humankind. It is in the divine light in which everything acquires its ultimate and eternal meaning. "It is good for us to be here," cried the apostle Peter seeing this light and this glory. And from that time, Christianity, the Church, faith is one continuous, joyful repetition of this "it is good for us to be here." But faith is also a plea for everlasting light, a thirst for illumination and transfiguration. This light continues to shine, through the darkness and evil, through the drab grayness and dull routine of this world, like a ray of sun piercing the clouds...

"Lord! It is good for us to be here!" If only these words might become ours, if only they might become the soul's answer to the gift of divine light, if only our prayer might become the prayer for transfiguration, for the victory of light!

As we continue our Lenten journey we are called to share Jesus' vision. Let us pray that we can overcome the darkness and despair and see the light of love. May the light of the Spirit transfigure our lives and world into Christ!

Peace

Fr Ron