

Today's Gospel reading offers a remarkable conclusion to the Epiphany season and turns us toward Lent. The transfiguration of Jesus is itself a great epiphany, or manifestation, a revealing. Let's take a look.

"About eight days after these sayings (concerning his death and resurrection and the call to discipleship), Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white."

You've had a "mountain top" experience I'm sure. A moment when you are lifted up into a different dimension so to speak, awed by an event or place, struck with a deeper understanding or insight, or overwhelmed by joy.

I had one of these ten days ago getting out of the cable car at the top of Squaw mountain. It was breathtakingly beautiful, the sun shining, the snow glistening and I felt an effusive joy radiating from head to toe. And, in Peter's infamous words, ***"it was indeed good to be there!"***

And that, my friends, can happen any day and any place!

A few years ago I visited a parishioner in a nursing home. She had not been there long and was not happy to be there. I found her in a large, four-bed room. When I walked in it was noisy, care givers, cleaning staff, and were all carrying on!

At her bed side we held hands and talked of life now radically changed for her. We said prayers and I pulled her bed tray over and set out the vessels with the bread and wine to share the Sacrament. Just then the nurse entered, called out her name and said "it's meds time" in a loud but cheerful voice. Then when the nurse noticed me and what we were doing, without missing a beat and with equal cheer, she said, "Oh you'll be having Holy Communion. How wonderful. I'll come back."

As I was saying my goodbyes, she reached out her hand to hold mine and said, "Oh pastor, thank you for coming. I was so down, really low and this has brought me into the courts of heaven."

Every moment in life is a moment ripe for transfiguration. In the midst of everyday, in the frantic pace we keep, in the dark times of life's painful realities, in our loneliness or despair, as well as in the moments of joy, we yearn for life transfigured.

“Then a voice was heard, this is my Son, my Chosen, listen to him.”

One must listen for the voice of God that speaks to us similar words, “You are my child, my beloved.” How can we hear this word of grace if our ears are plugged up with the overwhelming noise of the world around us with its demands and its allure vying for our attention, desiring our hearts to distrust anything that is not “real” or rational or practical!

And therein lies the rub. Much of life is trusting the awesome mystery of grace that calls us by name; trusting that voice, not capturing it!

Jesus resists Peter’s attempt, our attempts, to capture and secure the mountain top moment, calling instead for the embrace of transfiguration’s mystery - that is, the joining of the Spirit’s energizing presence within life’s daily journey.

Faith, understood as trust, after all, is not neat and tidy. It is the power to live in the present with the presence of Jesus, walking on the streets that we walk in our lives, into the messy work of building the reign of God!

Do you remember the first thing Jesus did after he and the disciples came down the mountain? (I know some of you do from our Bible study). He healed an epileptic boy! Jesus dug his hands and heart into the broken and dysfunction of life in order to redeem and liberate it!

Can we, as his disciples, as his beloved, do any less?

Come feast at the table of grace and be strengthened to trust and serve.