

2nd Sunday of Lent, March 16, 2025.

The Transformation of Jesus Christ: (Luke 9:28-36)

“About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters - one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying.) While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.” (Luke 9:28-36. New International Version)

Sunday Reflections: Jesus takes Peter, James, and John along as he goes up a mountain to pray. And while Jesus was praying, his appearance was transformed. He began to shine with a heavenly radiance. He looked not of this world. And as if that was not enough, two key figures from Israel’s past - Moses and Elijah joined him. Both men had experienced mountaintop encounters with God. Each of them represented the canon of Israel’s holy scriptures: Moses with the Torah and Elijah with the prophets. Israel had revered the legacy of these two men and the words of the Law and the Prophets. But then awe turned to terror when a mysterious cloud lowered onto the mountain and enveloped them. And then the voice from the cloud: ***“This is my Son! Whom I have chosen; Listen to him!”*** And then, just like that, the cloud was gone, Moses and Elijah were gone, and Jesus looked like plain old Jesus.

The transfiguration is a direct explanation, to Jesus statement, after He Predicted His Death. “And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” 23 Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. 25 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? 26 Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father

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and of the holy angels. 27 "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God." (Luke 9: 22-27. New International Version).

Jesus singles out Peter, James and John for special training. These will make up His inner circle. Each of them eventually played a key role in the early church. Peter became a great speaker, John became an important writer on the New Testament books and was the last disciple to die, while James was the first of the disciples to die for his faith. Our expectations about this life will be limited if this life is all we can see. Jesus Christ promised eternal life to those willing to trust Him. If we believe this promise, He will give us the courage to stand for him even during dangerous times.

Previous texts in the Bible indicated that Jesus was someone pretty special: a Messiah King, a man with healing capabilities, and a remarkably wise teacher. However, the voice of God singles out Jesus Christ from among all the great figures in the past as the long-awaited Messiah, who possesses divine authority. Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is God. Jesus would fulfill both the Law and the Prophets.

As the Son of God, Jesus Christ has the authority and power of God; thus, his words should be our final authority. If a person's teaching is true, it will agree with Jesus' teachings. And if one's life is truly Christian, then his/her life MUST agree with Jesus' teachings. Do not be hasty to seek advice and guidance from merely human sources and thereby neglect the message of Jesus. Test everything you hear against the words of Jesus, and you will not be led astray. If we believe Christ is God, we will surely want to do what He says.

St Paul, in his Closing Appeal for Steadfastness and Unity, encouraged Christians to be firm in Jesus Christ; "Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!" (Philippians 4:1. New International Version)

The three apostles had a great experience on the mountain, and they probably didn't want to leave. Sometimes, we, too, have some inspiring moments, and we may want to stay where we are – away from the realities and problems of our daily lives. Knowing that struggles await us in the valley encourages us to linger on the mountaintop. Staying on top of the mountain prohibits us from ministering to others. Retreats, Lent, and times of renewal are great refreshing moments, but only so we can return refreshed to serve the world. Our faith and experiences must make sense off the mountain and on the mountain.

At lent, we need to nourish our lives with the following:

Paying attention to the Voice of God: This moment underscores a profound truth: God often speaks quietly, subtly, inviting us to listen closely and attentively. Psalm 46:10 emphasizes the

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importance of stillness in experiencing God's presence: "*Be still, and know that I am God.*" In the silence, away from the tumult of life, we are reminded of His sovereignty and invited to rest in His peace.

The Voice of God: Defining God's whisper can be challenging, as it transcends the physicality of sound. It's a heart-stirring spiritual nudge, sometimes experienced as a sudden insight or peace in decision-making. The nature of God's whisper is profoundly personal and intimate, reflecting His desire for a relationship with us that is based on love and trust. Unlike the world's noise, which often seeks to distract or overwhelm, God's whisper is characterized by gentleness and precision. It speaks directly to our hearts, tailored to our needs and circumstances. This divine communication demonstrates the depth of God's knowledge of us, His care, and His desire for our good.

That voice calls us into Intimacy with God. When God whispers, it requires us to draw close, to lean in. This act of leaning in symbolizes our desire to be near Him, to prioritize His voice over the clamor of the world. James 4:8 tells us, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." The whisper signifies a personal, intimate form of communication reserved not for the masses but for those willing to quiet their hearts and listen.

That voice helps foster dependence on God: In a world that often champions self-reliance and the noise of confidence, God's whisper reminds us of the importance of reliance on Him. Proverbs 3:5-6 advises, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." The whisper of God encourages us to seek His wisdom and guidance, acknowledging that our understanding is limited and His is infinite.

That voice invites us into a deeper relationship: God's voice is not just for guidance but also for continuous dialogue with Him. It's an invitation to engage in an ongoing, deepening relationship where we are attuned to His presence in every aspect of our lives. This level of communication fosters a profound sense of belonging and purpose rooted in divine love and understanding.

Challenges in Hearing God's Whisper: Despite the beauty and intimacy of God's whispers, numerous challenges can impede our ability to hear Him. Our daily lives are inundated with technology, social obligations, and the relentless pace of modern living. These distractions can drown out God's quiet voice, making it difficult to find moments of silence to hear His whispers.

Internal Barriers - Doubt, fear, and preconceived notions about how God should speak can hinder our ability to hear the voice of God. These internal barriers can create a noise, clouding our spiritual perception and making it challenging to discern God's voice.

Practical Steps to Hearing God's Whisper: Despite these challenges, there are practical steps we can take to cultivate an environment where God's voice can be heard. "***He who has ears, let him hear.***" (Matthew 13:9 urges)

Finding physical and mental spaces of quiet is essential. Meditation and Prayer allow us not only to speak to God but also to listen, creating a two-way channel of communication. Reading the Bible allow God to speak directly into our lives, offering guidance, comfort, and wisdom tailored to our current circumstances. Writing our encounters (Journaling) helps us to document those thoughts, prayers, and the moments we feel God's whispers can enhance our awareness and understanding of His presence in our lives. Journaling serves as a tangible record of our spiritual journey, helping us to recognize patterns, growth, and how God communicates with us.

Station of the Cross (Mary's Way of the Cross by Richard Furley. The Fourth Station)

"Jesus meets His grieving Mother: I had managed to break through the crowd and was walking side by side with my Son. I called to him through the shouting voices. He stopped. ***Our eyes met, mine full of tears of anguish, his full of pain and confusion. I felt helpless; then his eyes said to me, "Courage! There is a purpose for this". As I stumbled on, I knew he was right. So I followed and prayed silently***". Amen.

Conclusion

Hearing God's whisper can seem daunting as we navigate the noisy corridors of our daily lives. Yet, within this very challenge lies a beautiful invitation—an invitation to draw closer, to cultivate a deep and intimate relationship with God. By embracing stillness, engaging in prayer and meditation, diving into the Bible, and reflecting through journaling, we open ourselves to the transformative power of God's gentle whispers.

At each 11:00 AM Sunday Mass, we send our little ones to the Children's liturgy with this song: "Open our ears, Lord, help me hear your Word."

In a world that often feels overwhelmingly loud, may we find strength in the quiet, attuning our hearts to the voice of God. In this voice, we are drawn closer to Him, discovering the profound depths of His love, guidance, and wisdom for our lives. May our journey be filled with many such moments of divine whisper, guiding us ever closer to the heart of God. Amen.

God bless you.

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