

“And He Was Transfigured Before Them”

Second Sunday of Lent – March 12, 2017-Matthew 17: 1-9

Peter, James and John are privileged participants in the event of the transfiguration. All three of the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, portray Jesus taking these three disciples up the mountain for a divine encounter. Here Jesus provides a connection between the earthly realm of humanity and the glorious truth about Jesus’ Divine lineage.

Every year on the second Sunday of Lent the Church celebrates the Transfiguration of the Lord. This year the gospel writer, Matthew, is speaking to his community about Jesus being the fulfillment of the Old Testament Law. The significance of this day, in the liturgical year, stands as a testimony for us to “witness” the revelation of Jesus as God.

“And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him.” Matthew has set this scene on the mountain top, a place of encounter with God. He has placed there two of the Old Testament prophets that speak of the sacred heritage and history of the Israelite people. There is no question in this story as to who Matthew believes Jesus to be. He is the Son of God.

Peter is so taken up with this experience that he asks Jesus for permission to erect three tents, places of worship, where they might remain forever. This desire is overshadowed by the voice of God coming out of the cloud saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” Jesus knows that the fulfillment of his mission will only be complete if he returns to the world below, living out the final days of his mission, leading to his death and resurrection. He brings the three back to the world below to live this out as his disciples. He knows that the fulfillment of their understanding will take time.

This story is an important challenge for us today. It is a challenge for us to look with the eyes of faith on this scene and consider how we view Jesus. Do we see Jesus as the fulfillment of God’s promise? Are we prepared this Lent to recommit ourselves to this truth and live as his disciples? Are we more like Peter, wanting only the glory and joy that is Jesus, rather than, the suffering of the cross that is the other side of the truth?

This week, take time to re-enter into this story. Place yourself as one of the three disciples who witness this remarkable experience. Consider your own interpretation to this gospel account and how this truth about Jesus impacts your life. In doing so, Jesus might be truly transfigured for each one of us.

Happy Lent!


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