

Transfiguration
8/6/2023

A DEEPER REALITY

Every year August 6 is the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord. Being a feast of the Lord, it is always observed, even on Sunday.

On the mountain, the deeper reality of Jesus's identity is revealed to Peter, James and John. It's not as if Jesus becomes different from who he was before but rather that what he has been is now revealed more fully. It's called the Transfiguration and not a transformation. Those three apostles see what is already exists there. They see Jesus as he really and truly is. At Jesus' baptism, there is a voice from heaven revealing Jesus as the Son of God. Now in his transfigured glory, once again the voice of the Father is heard. The Father not only reveals Jesus as his beloved Son. Not only is he well pleased with him. There's something else, an instruction. We're told to listen to him.

A disciple is a student, one who listens and seeks to learn. The Church is a community of disciples. From the Pope to the most recently baptized newborn infant; the Church is that community of disciples and while different people are called to fulfill different roles within the life of the Church, they are all disciples. So a disciple is one who listens to Jesus. The ways to listen are many.

We listen to Jesus in the echoes of our heart and to hear those echoes, it helps to cultivate at least a little bit of silence, interior and exterior, in our lives. In that silence, we dispose ourselves to listen to God and our own conscience.

We listen to Jesus in his words, the Bible. Pope Francis encourages people to carry a small pocket version of the Gospels and to spend just two minutes a day reading it, two minutes. He challenges people to do this and to see how it will change their lives because they're encountering Jesus, listening to Jesus in his word.

We listen to Jesus in the teachings of his Church. We find it illustrated in the lives of the saints, in those who we meet in daily life, especially in the poor and those in need.

And then there are privileged places where we listen to him and one very privileged place: the sacraments in general and the Eucharist in particular. Ultimately, the Sacraments are all windows into the mystery of God's love for us, windows into the mysteries. The Sacraments are the actions of Jesus through human ministers. They aren't just what we attend or do; they are a participation in God's redeeming work. The Sacraments aren't just what Jesus did back in history but what Jesus does, what he continues to do today, what he continues to do right now.

And here in the Eucharist, we come together as God's people and listen to his word. The Mass is a privileged place to listen to Jesus' word to us. Why is that? Because we journey to God together. We journey to God as a pilgrim people.

Here, Jesus continues to speak to us as we listen to different parts of the Bible, which at times will include Moses, Elijah and so much more and especially the Gospels. But it doesn't stop there. It continues past that part of the Mass we call the Liturgy of the Word to the what we call the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Here bread and wine are brought forward, prepared and blessed. Then the Holy Spirit is invoked and we again listen to Jesus' words, *This is my body...This is the chalice of my blood.*

Here, as on the mount of the Transfiguration, a deeper reality is revealed but in this case, it is a transformation as bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ so that we in turn may be transformed in Christ.

Here, together, we enter into the saving action of Jesus' death and resurrection. There may not be bright lights. There may not be a booming voice from heaven but here the deeper reality of Jesus' identity is revealed. Here Jesus continues to enter into our world. Here Jesus nourishes us together with his word and here he feeds us with his Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. That is to say that here he makes a complete gift of himself to the Father and to us, inviting us to do the same. Here we seek, with lives of intentional faith, to listen to him together but it doesn't stop there. Disciples aren't just those who listen but those who act; those who receive the word of God and let it bear good fruit in their lives and in the world.

The Transfiguration isn't just about a deeper reality concerning Jesus, it's also about a deeper reality concerning us. Jesus calls us to new life with him, to share in his glory. There's a road to that glory: the road of discipleship, the road of listening to Jesus and doing what he asks of us. It's the road of following Jesus daily, of

carrying our cross daily, of each day sharing in ways large or small, in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus, his dying and rising to new life.

During this Eucharistic Revival, may we come to grow in that deeper reality of who Jesus is, of who we are in him and of the gift he makes of himself to us in our food for the journey, in the great gift of the Eucharist.