

## Homily February 22, 2004

### Last Sunday after the Epiphany, Year C. February 22, 2004 ✚ St. Luke 9:28-36

**+Grant O Lord that thy word only may be spoken and thy word only received. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

*“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.” Verses 28 & 29*

I... Today's Gospel invites us to share a moment of intense relationship between Jesus and His Father...and from it with His Apostles, and now even with us a more intense relationship. The Transfiguration is an ALIVE, fully-aware moment of WHO Jesus is. So much has been said about this experience of Transfiguration. That it is a foretaste of Holy Week (because it tells us He discussed His departure with Moses & Elijah in the cloud-epiphany. Also that it is a foretaste of the Resurrection, the Glorified Body of the Risen Lord seen prefigured in the dazzling and glistening countenance of His face and clothing.

But as I re-read the text this past week I heard another Question in my head, and came to see the Transfiguration in a new way.

My Question is:

II... “What is the CAUSE or POWER behind the Transfiguration happening? Not so much the Why, but the How, the “Where does such power come from, what causes it? The answer comes when you begin to really study St. Luke's Gospel. It has been called by some Biblical Scholars “The Gospel of Prayer”. St. Luke sets just about everything in his Gospel in the context of Prayer. That is how Jesus comes to the Father, that is how He comes to His own mission. And that is how He finds the strength for His Journey of Suffering and Death. Just think for a moment of the some of the events invaded by prayer. Such as on the Cross He prays for His executioners: “Father forgive them....”and to his Father “My God, My God why hast thou forsaken me?” Jesus' prayer is good Jewish prayer- straight from the Psalms of David. The Psalms have comforted God's people for thousands of years. They give strength; they bring us closer to our Father. (Any of you who have come to me for confession or counsel will know I often assign Psalms for penance or spiritual reading, they are the very prayer-heart of the Holy Scriptures.)

III... So today St. Luke call our attention to Jesus in prayer with Peter, James and John. St. Luke points out the Transfiguration takes place ONLY in the state and attitude of prayer, really intense prayer. And in that state they come to see WHO Jesus is and His mission. Previously in the past few Sunday's St. Luke had show us the Disciples were not “getting-it”, who this Jesus is. In sending them out to preach and heal, they see miracles but don't get it. He shows them water turned into wine, but they don't get it. He

shows them how to feed 5,000 plus, but they don't get it or comprehend the larger message and purpose for which Jesus comes among us.

Even after asking St. Peter directly: "Who do YOU say that I AM?", they show a lack of accepting in their protesting His announcement that He must go to Jerusalem and there die. Jesus' response to their resistance is to take Peter, James and John to go and pray on the mountain. It is there, in prayer, they will see His true glory, His eternal being, His divinity, and the very Trinity we preach.

IV... And so it is true for us yet today- we will not completely "get-it" or "see-it" without some very active and intense prayer in our lives. We will not be able to get to Holy Week or the Easter Events without some serious 'prayer-time'.

So you say to me "Father, it is so hard for me to pray, to stay focused. I am so tired by the time I come home from work, I find myself falling asleep when I try to have some private prayer time. Or you say: "Father, my mind wanders during Mass and I get so little out of it, I just can't pray, I don't know how!"

You know what Father says? "Pray anyway." "Pray anyway." Just keep doing it, don't give up. The Gospel tells us lots of times the Apostles and Disciples were on the verge of falling asleep, or were asleep like at the Garden of Gethsemane and in today's Gospel for the Transfiguration. When I find myself dozing off, I try to remember it happened to them too, and that relationship with God comes in prayer. That's when our relationship with the Father is most intense- when we know most clearly "Jesus is Our Lord", "Our Saviour", that Jesus is our ALL.

What is the cause, the 'HOW' of His Transfiguration? It is PRAYER- intense, real prayer from the depths of our being. Let us wake up from our sleep, and in prayer others will also see the transfiguring Glory of Jesus, and come to a transfigured relationship with God in their own lives. The "How" is by Prayer.

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