

CHAPLAIN'S BULLETIN MARCH 13, 2022



Dear Folks,

This Sunday we read about the Transfiguration. The Second Sunday of Lent always gives us the Transfiguration, so that leads to the question why is it so important for Lent? In fact, what do we do with the Transfiguration besides “Wow! Isn’t that cool?” Of course, it is really cool, but if we look closer, it gets even more interesting. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all have some differences, but they all have the Transfiguration, and they also have Jesus’ three predictions of the Passion. There is the first prediction that “The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised (Luke 9:22).” Then Jesus tells us that to be His disciple, we must be willing to take up our cross and follow Him, and that if we try to save our lives we will lose them, and if we lose our lives for Him we will find them. Then Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up the mountain and they see a glimpse of His glory. When they come down the mountain, Jesus exorcises a boy with a demon, and then there is a second prediction of the passion. The fact that all three Synoptic Gospels follow this pattern gets my attention.

Notice that:

This glimpse of His glory shows them there is more to Him than they realized (What does it take to get people’s attention?). He is not just another prophet.

Only Peter, James, and John were given this gift. God has no problem giving certain gifts to some people and not to others.

Even for Peter, James, and John, there was only a glimpse, and then back to work.

Jesus showing a glimpse of His glory is wrapped in discussion of the cross (also, in Luke we see Moses and Elijah discussing the “exodus” that he is to experience in Jerusalem [Luke 9:31], a reference to His crucifixion).

The presence of Moses and Elijah, representing the Law and the Prophets, says that what is going on is the culmination of all the history of Israel, and all they had been taught and all they had hoped for until now.

So, what now? There can be a tendency to treat our practice of the faith as one task among many, and it can feel like it. This reminds us that more is happening than meets the eye. Christianity is either everything to us, or it is nothing.

Some gifts, some consolations, are given to some and not to others. If you haven’t had a mystical experience, it does not mean you are a failure in your spirituality. The call is to be faithful.

A little bit of consolation sometimes has to go a long way. The times when our faith feels dead, but we strive to be faithful anyway, are often the most meritorious and fruitful.