

Reflection for the Feast of the Transfiguration

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Today's feast gives a sense of BEYOND OURSELVES. With all that is bombarding us from the world around us, our spirit can become overwhelmed, discouraged. We can question what hope is there when people are caught with their own personal sense of unlimited freedom, without any thought of a common good in our society, with dismissing the need to care for those on the other side of the world or things not affecting them personally.

The context of the Transfiguration of Jesus in Mark's Gospel takes place mid-way between Caesarea Philippi and Jerusalem. Caesarea Philippi is where Jesus, gathered with his apostles and asked them, "Who do people say that I am?" There, he also told them that he was going to suffer many things, be rejected and killed. Peter did not like that. He protested strongly. Jesus was preparing them for what was going to happen. Though Jesus did not end telling what was to happen with the tragedy of the cross. Jesus also promised that after the suffering, he would rise again.

When they climbed Mt Tabor, they were mid-way on the road to Jerusalem. In Mark's Gospel, going to Jerusalem meant Jesus was moving towards the culmination of his life, the suffering, death and resurrection.

The more sensitive and aware we become of what is happening around us, we too, are surrounded with seemingly unsurmountable complexities and burdens. We do not see the way forward with agreement on Climate change, the urgency of the earth crying out for transformation regarding how we are treating it; of overcoming the inequalities, injustices, divisions within our society. Like Peter, many want to protest strongly. I do not want to look at that. Yet, we are forgetting or neglecting the other part of the story, the promise of Resurrection, the promise of life and good, **beyond** the negatives we face. How do we get there, to the BEYOND?

Nurturing one's inner life can be the saving grace. Besides the tragedies of our world, another dimension present in our midst is the deep and broad desire for spirituality, for depth, for communion, unity with others, with movements that stimulate energy and coming together to make solutions possible. It is the Spirit of God present in our world. These give us a vision of the Kingdom of God already present in our midst. A taste of the Parousia is here if we open our eyes to see it.

Jesus brought Peter, James and John with him to the top of the mountain, Mt Tabor. There, Jesus' appearance was changed. He was transfigured. They experienced Jesus **beyond** his physical reality. Who He was and his mission, were in bright light. Mark tells us that, "Jesus' appearance changed before their eyes. Even his clothes became dazzling white". Peter, James and John were in awe. Though they still could not understand fully. Jesus wanted them to have a perspective. A footnote in the Christian Community Bible tells us the Transfiguration is in fact a summary of all revelation. Moses and Elijah represent the law and the prophets, the Old Testament. They present to the apostles the Christ of the Gospel, the Christ they would be commissioned to preach to the world.

If we are to be faithful to our mission as Christians, to be a light for the world, we too, need a perspective BEYOND the everyday happenings, the suffering of our world. We need those experiences at the top of the mountain, the time in reflection and prayer to

enter into the Christ of the Gospels and his message. We might not understand it all. We might still lament and protest at the suffering. Yet we need that time in prayer and reflection to keep believing that "All will be well. All will be well." Yes, the suffering, the messiness, the frustration in the everyday of life is necessary. In the cloud, the voice of God urged us to Listen to Him, to Jesus.

In working through what is before us, we see that we alone cannot do it. We need to see beyond, call on the Spirit, on God's presence. To listen to that deeper reality, we find life. It is a gift and experience in some way that God gifts us with a Transfiguration, a perspective beyond.

We need to Listen to the voice of the Holy One deep within our spirit. To just be there in God's presence, whether we can feel its effects or not, we are not alone on this journey. God is present leading us beyond what we could ever imagine.