

Transfiguration of Jesus

Introduction

Today we celebrate the feast of the Transfiguration of Jesus.

The disciples and Jesus had been working hard, taking God's message all over Israel, healing the sick, traveling from village to village. Jesus needs a break, as do his disciples. Jesus goes to the mountains, and invites Peter, James and John to come with him.

While they are relaxing and praying on the mountain, Jesus is transfigured... today's feast.

What is this all about? And what does it mean for us.

Refrain... Taste and see the goodness of the Lord. PS 34:2

I What Is This All About?

There are many ways of interpreting this experience of Jesus and his disciples. Let me offer one that speaks to me today.

We all need a break once in awhile.

We need to step back, relax, get away, and have some time to ourselves and with our loved ones or friends.

Sometimes our lives get so cluttered with daily worries, with things we have to do, with jobs or school... we need a little time off.

To me, that's what vacations are all about.

For many of us we come to these beautiful mountains to relax, get away, and enjoy family and friends.

We need a break from our fast paced lives.

And we probably need a little time to touch base with God.

The beauty of the mountains or the river or the streams, a star filled night, a campfire, a leisurely meal with family and friends – we take time to enjoy these experiences...

and hopefully to recognize them as blessings from our loving God who wants us to enjoy them.

Let me tell you a story about taking time with God... if I told it before, it bears repeating...

Story... The Empty Chair

The old man's daughter had asked the local priest to come and pray with her father, who was ill and bed-ridden. When the priest arrived he found the man lying in bed with his head propped up on two pillows and an empty chair beside his bed. The priest assumed that the old fellow had been informed of his visit. "I guess you were expecting me," he said.

"No, who are you?" replied the old man.

"I'm the new associate priest at your parish," the priest replied. "When I saw the empty chair, I figured you knew I was going to show up."

"Oh yeah, the chair," said the bed ridden man. "Would you mind closing the door?" Puzzled, the priest shut the door.

"I've never told anyone this, not even my daughter," said the man. "But all of my life I have never known how to pray. At the Sunday Mass I used to hear the priest talk about prayer, but it always went right over my head. I abandoned my attempt at prayer," the old man continued, "til one day, about four years ago, my best friend said to me, 'Joe, prayer is just a simple matter of having a conversation with Jesus. Here's what I suggest. Sit down on a chair, place an empty chair in front of you, and, in faith, see Jesus on that chair. It's not spooky because He promised, "I'll be with you always." Then just speak to Him and listen in the same way you're doing with me right now.'"

'So, Father, I tried it and I've liked it so much that I do it a couple of hours every day. I'm careful though. If my daughter saw me talking to an empty chair, she'd either have a nervous breakdown or send me off to the funny farm."

The priest was deeply moved by the story and encouraged the old man to continue on the journey. Then he prayed with him, anointed him with oil, and returned to the rectory.

Two nights later the daughter called to tell the priest that her dad had died that afternoon. "Did he seem to die in peace?" he asked. "Yes, when I left the house around two o'clock, he called me over to his bedside, told me one of his corny jokes, and kissed me on the cheek. When I got back from the store an hour later, I found him dead. But there was something strange Father. In fact, beyond strange – kinda weird. Apparently, just before

daddy died, he leaned over and rested his head on the empty chair beside his bed."

Refrain... Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

II Take Time

This story reminds me that during my vacation,
my time away, my break,
my enjoying the beauty of these surroundings –
I need to take some time with Jesus, to talk to him as a friend,
to thank him for my many blessings,
to recognize that Jesus wants to spend this time with me – just me and him,
on the mountain.

Then maybe we will recognize how precious we are to Jesus, and how
precious Jesus can be to us...

Maybe we will recognize the beauty of God come among us – not just the
beauty of God's creation, but the beauty of God's own son, Jesus.

Refrain... Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Conclusion...

Let's pray.

Jesus, during vacation time, help me to take time to be with you.

Help me to recognize how precious and beautiful you are.

Help me to appreciate the many blessings you have showered my life with.

And help me to give you thanks, instead of taking so much for granted.

Help me to see my world transfigured – to recognize my world as a place
where you and my loving Father also dwell, each day.

Say something like this to Jesus at communion:

From the Desk of Donald Ware, C.P.

Then thank God for the blessings of these surroundings, and for my family and friends.

And be sure to tell *them* today that you love them.

Amen