

I've talked before about a movie called *The Shack* that came out 3 years ago. It made a deep impression on me. It's about a man dealing with the kidnapping and murder of his young daughter. And then he meets the Three Persons of The Holy Trinity! I encourage everyone to see it, because it will lead you closer to God; it stays with you. I mention it today because the Gospel reminded me of it.

In the movie, there's a scene where this grieving father observes some people who are in Heaven. Each one is luminous; they're glowing, bathed in an aura of light around them. They shine. They look like Jesus did when he was transfigured.

The Transfiguration of Jesus, and the movie, *The Shack*, give us a foretaste of the glory we'll have in Heaven with Jesus.

When Jesus shared his true identity with his three friends at His Transfiguration, He reveals to us that He wants to be our Light, to guide the way we live, to keep us from stumbling on the obstacles that keep us from living as God made us to be – from sin in all its forms. The Light of Christ keeps our lives from crashing, it prevents life's hardships from wearing us down, and it finds us when we're lost.

Jesus's Transfiguration is the preview of His Resurrection, the final step of the paschal mystery process: that sequence of suffering, dying and resurrection, that plays out over and over again in our earthly lives. The Transfiguration and Resurrection are God's love shining forth, reassuring us that evil will not triumph, and eternal life and happiness is our destiny.

We'd like to skip that suffering and death part of the paschal mystery sequence, but there's no resurrection without the cross. St. Paul said in our Second Reading that there are hardships that come with living the Gospel, but God gives us the strength we need to bear them. The source is Jesus, and as the Father said from the sky: "Listen to him."

But we can't stay on the mountain top. Jesus brought his friends back down to the ground, because he wants his disciples to be a living Gospel in the world. The Word of Jesus can't stay at the mountaintop; it can't just stay in our hearts, like a personal possession. The Word of Jesus grows by giving it to others in our words and actions.

So many Catholics are inhibited about spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. It's like we've stopped our spiritual journey. We're like a parked car, waiting for enlightenment to be handed out through the drive-thru window, like a happy meal. It's urgent that we bring God's love and word into this world.

I think what would help us break out of our shell is to keep reaffirming to ourselves how much deeply loved and provided for we are. We can trust God. And then we'll give ourselves and our love away with greater freedom. We have more than we need, and we know why it came to us in the first place: to share.

I have another suggestion: the way we imagine Christ really affects how we live our lives as his disciples. So let's pray more often with this image in mind of the Transfigured Christ, the Resurrected Christ (they're the same image). That image helps us get through our hardships. Because this is where Jesus shows us the glory to come that is ours; and we will attain it because it is God's gift to those who are faithful – not perfect, not sinless, but faithful.

St. Paul was not concerned or disheartened that his own mission could be considered unsuccessful by the eyes of the world. What's important to him is that we endure our hardships and live a holy life. It doesn't matter if we're met with derision or rejection. Despite discouragements and failures, persevere and be holy. Let's live our lives in such a way that it is obvious to others to whom we belong. Some people will see our shine and our glow now. Everyone will see it later.

Fr. John Ozella, Pastor, Christ the King, Second Sunday of Lent, March 8, 2020