

Feast of the Transfiguration

Some of you have returned your pledge form for the stained glass restoration project. It's important we all chip in to make this happen. And to clarify, this is a 2 year pledge, meaning you don't have to make the full donation now, but anytime over the next 2 years. Donate half your pledge now and the other half later if you want.

Next Saturday the KofC will be having a pork chili supper at OLG. Also next Saturday evening is Classic Movie Night, we'll be watching "On the Waterfront" starring Marlon Brando. It's in the school gym with doors opening after the 5:30 Mass.

+I read today's Gospel earlier in the week and I thought of UFO's. Today is the Transfiguration of the Lord, when he appeared as bright as the sun on Mt. Tabor. If someone was at the bottom of the mountain and saw this light up top, they'd be awestruck. Not an unidentified flying object, more like, unidentified shining object. The Transfiguration is not simply an event that happened two-thousand-years ago, nor a future event yet to come. It's a reality of the present, a way of life available to those who believe and live out the Gospel. The light that shines forth from Christ in the Transfiguration, and later in the Resurrection, is the triumph of light over the darkness of evil. This feast is both a reminder and an opportunity for us to look to Christ as the light of the world.

This miraculous event is hard to grasp, or even imagine. Matthew describes the disciple's encounter of Jesus as bright as the sun. Have you ever tried looking at the sun, that's bright? But what does this actually mean? The Transfiguration is an exceptional revelation, both to Jesus's disciples and to us too. Just one week prior to this event, Peter famously declared Jesus to be the Messiah. The transfiguration affirms this for them and even elevates their understanding. If there was any doubt as to Jesus's divinity, that's laid to rest. The light doesn't simply reflect off of Jesus, He is the *source* of the light that radiates from within Him and through His humanity.

Besides confirming His divinity, the transfiguration prefigures the glory to come at His Resurrection. We get a hint at how the story ends, which would otherwise be hard to believe on

Good Friday. Suffering is our destiny as Christians, but it's not our end. The trials and persecution to come can present doubt and the temptation to flee is real, but the glory revealed on this mountain top assures us that the future Passion of Christ in all its ugliness and sadness will be transformed into something beautiful and joyous. Jesus came to save mankind from sin and death through His own death on the cross, and that victory is prefigured in His Transfiguration. This is our faith in a nutshell, the good news, the reason we live life with hope and without fear of death.

The Transfiguration and what it symbolizes compels us to make our faith known to others. If you understand that the Son of God became man, died and rose from the dead so that we might have eternal life; and that our salvation hinges on us believing this...you must be willing to bring this truth to others. To remain silent in the face of ignorance on the part of others is to watch them stumble through life and fall to their eternal death. As baptized Christians we all have a responsibility to bring others to the Church, to share the good news, and encourage each other in the faith.

A formal way in which this is carried out is through the RCIA program, whereby people can learn about our Catholic faith, foster a relationship with God, and discern whether or not to enter the Catholic Church. We all know someone who has asked questions about our faith, is searching for answers, or simply waiting for a personal invitation to become Catholic. This is where we act as a disciple of Christ and assist them by suggesting something such as RCIA, which will begin in September.

God wanted to bring the people of ancient Israel to the understanding that the Messiah, Jesus, was in their midst. No less than back then, God wants people to know and believe in Jesus today. When the three disciples became afraid and fell to the ground, "Jesus came and touched

them.” When Jesus touches someone they are forever changed. He wants to touch the lives of everyone, and He wants us to help make that happen. What does Jesus say to the disciples when touches them? “Rise and do not be afraid.” Sin and the normal struggles of life that weigh people down cause fear and anxiety, whether they show it or not; Christ wants to raise them up and disperse the fear from their lives. But often times that only happens when a person of faith directs that person to God.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus told them not to tell anyone what they saw “until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.” Well, He’s been raised, almost 2,000 years ago...I think it’s time to tell others. If you saw a UFO, would you tell someone about it...I think so? We have experienced something more miraculous, more incredible than a UFO, so why aren’t we saying anything? We can and should be having deliberate conversations with others. And not to convince them that Jesus started the Catholic Church, or that we have the fullness of truth; because although true, we’re not trying to win an argument. We evangelize and invite others to the Catholic faith because through your baptism you have become a beloved child of God and we should want that for others.

We must share what God the Father said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” By your union with Christ, God the Father speaks those same words to you; ‘you are my beloved son...you are my beloved daughter’, and that changes everything. Should we not want that for others? Some of you have loved one’s who are not practicing the faith, or don’t want to hear of God’s love, and you have come to realize that it might come down to *someone else* reaching them, getting through to them...what if you are that person for someone else’s loved one?