

Today's gospel tells Mark's version of the wonderful story of the transfiguration, when Jesus appeared in his glory on a high mountain.

Jesus knew trouble was coming and He wanted his disciples to be at peace, peace in their hearts, peace gained through understanding.

Why did he show them himself in glory before he went up to Jerusalem to die? He knew it would be hard for them to accept that their leader would be killed in a shameful scandalous way on the cross, so he wanted to give them an image of hope and power that would not fade away, in order to get them ready.

If you think about it, this is natural. It shows Jesus' understanding of human nature. We often promise our children a treat to help them get through an ordeal, "You can have an ice cream after you get your needle at the Doctor!" or "You can have a new bicycle if you study hard and improve your grades!"

Even as adults, we say things like you'll get an extra day off if your work overtime tonight!

The church promises us the glory of the resurrection after the sacrifices of Lent and we remember this story today near the beginning of Lent because that is exactly what Jesus did for his disciples.

He showed the disciples what would be at the end of the hard road that was coming up, so they wouldn't lose heart, so they would have peace in their hearts, and so they would understand.

This is why the story of the Transfiguration is read to us today, so that the very wonder of the miracle will make us raise our heads to heaven, raise our hearts and ears to God for a moment, so that when we look back around us at the earth, we will have that memory in our spirit to help us remember what is really important.

There are so many important images in this passage of scripture to help the disciples understand and to find peace after Jesus was crucified, when they had a chance to think things through later and remember.

Moses and Elijah appear, two of the most revered people in the whole Jewish culture and religion. They were there talking to Jesus to show the disciples that Jesus was the master and they the servants.

Moses represented the Law and Elijah the Prophets and Jesus had told the disciples that he came to fulfill all that was said in the Law and the prophets, so the disciples would know he was the one who the scriptures predicted would come, no matter what happened to him later in Jerusalem.

In Luke's version of this event he tells us that they were speaking of Jesus' exodus, not his death, but his journey to leave earthly sorrow and go to heavenly joy, so the disciples would know that his earthly death was not the end.

God the Father speaks to them from a bright cloud, not a dark and forbidding one, so they would understand he spoke to teach them, not to frighten them.

And when they come down, Jesus shows again that he understands human nature when he tells Peter and James and John not to talk to others yet because his death might only confuse and dishearten them even more after they heard about this glory from the disciples without seeing it for themselves.

Jesus gave his disciples a special vision to help them be at peace and for us today, who did not see this vision for ourselves, he give us his body in holy communion, the eucharist, to fill our hearts with peace when they are filled with sadness at the death he endured for our sake.

Jesus knows that if we do not have peace in our own hearts, we will not be able to be at peace or share peace with others.

So what can we do today, this Lent, to be at peace? Every Lent, in our archdiocese, we participate in the Share Life campaign when we help so many agencies who are doing good.

One group which is helped by Share Life is Development and Peace and their theme this year is "Together in Peace"

Cardinal Collins has asked us all to participate in this theme as a way of building peace and reconciliation in our homes, our country and around the world.

There is a booklet available that talks about achieving peace by knocking down walls and building bridges. We build bridges by connecting with others, not hiding behind walls, by communicating, learning and understanding just As Jesus helped the disciples learn and understand what was happening.

When I read about knocking down walls, it reminded me of the old story of the Anglican who went to heaven, and as St. Peter was showing him around, they came upon a tall white wall and the Anglican asked, "What's over there?"

St. Peter said, "Oh never mind, let me show you the next section." But everywhere they went, they ran into the wall again and St. Peter avoided the explanation until finally the Anglican said, "I'm supposed to be happy in heaven but I'll never be at peace until I know what's on the other side of that wall!"

St. Peter said, "Oh all right, the other side is the Catholic section, they think they are the only ones up here!"

There is some information in your bulletins and at the doors of the church about the "Together for Peace" program, there's a Calendar for Lent with suggested activities and prayers each day to help us build a culture of peace, there's even an app on the Appstore and Googleplay so you can check in on your phone when you have a moment.

The booklet has some wonderful stories of peace building in action in places like Lebanon, Nigeria, Peru and Cambodia which make our problems in Canada seem pretty small.

Development and Peace is one of the many Share Life agencies that couldn't function without our annual generosity to this campaign.

But we can remember that in the end, we are the ones who can't function without our annual generosity, because no matter how much other people may change or grow because of the programs sponsored by Share Life, it is ourselves who grow and change the most when we give.

Sacrifice isn't a hardship, sacrifice brings peace. Just as Jesus' sacrifice brings salvation and eternal life and he was transformed from the broken man on the cross to the glorious Lord the disciples saw, first on the mountain and then at Easter and at the ascension, so it can be for us.

The Lord wanted his disciples to know peace and he wants that for us too. Come and receive the Lord's body in Holy Communion, let Him change you and transform you and transfigure you into a true disciple, with a heart that will truly know his peace forever.