

Feast of the Transfiguration
St. Luke 9:28-36
August 6, 2017
St. George's Bolton
Fr. Chris

Decisions

“As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him.”

You think you know everything. You think you've seen everything. You think you know all the answers. You've become familiar with someone or something, even your religion. Familiarity sometimes eclipses what has been right in front of us, all along. Open your eyes and ears. Then something changes and you see the light.

Has that ever happened to you? Have you ever had one of those, *“I get it moments?”*

I am reminded here of staring at a complicated set of directions, like those for a piece of furniture from Ikea. Ever assemble one of those things? They look great and easy to assemble in the store, but they are complicated when you get them home, take out all the pieces and read the directions. You sit there staring at all the stuff, and say to yourself, *“This cannot be. This makes no sense whatsoever!”* And you might try and jam tab A into slot H and force the two together, because it looks like it makes sense. You get frustrated and anxious. You are ready to give up. And then you have one of those *ah-ha* moments and all of sudden you get it, and

understand what you are supposed to do. Life is like this sometimes, isn't it, except there seem to be no sets of directions that you can read about how to get it right and what you are supposed to do? Or are there?

It's kind of like following a road with no map or GPS to guide you. You travel down that road and you start to doubt yourself. Maybe I have made the wrong decision? Maybe this isn't the right way to where I want to go? But you keep going forward, intent on reaching your destination. And then you reach a point where something, with some divine intervention maybe, that confirms your suspicions and you realize you were headed in the wrong direction. Then, realizing you are lost, with a little more prayer, your eyes are opened and God leads you in the right direction back to where you were supposed to be.

Life is full of those decisions. Sometimes they look large in front of us. At other times, we hardly realize they are there, and ignore them. But not to decide is to decide.

In fact decisions follow us throughout our lives: What school should I go to? What subject should I major in? What is my passion? Who is the one for me? Who will you live with and spend the rest of your life with? Will we and when will we have children? What job should I choose? Should you move to a different house? A different state? A different part of the country or a different country altogether? What kind of car should you buy? And here's an important one that not enough people are asking these days: *What church will you join or not?* Do I believe in God or not? Finally, when should I retire and where should I live?

These are all important choices and decisions we face. They can be and usually are life changing. Not quite the same as those decisions we make every day, like what socks shall I put on this morning? Should I wear the green shirt today? (For years I liked being a full time priest, because 90% of the clothes in my closet were black, and every day, I wore a black shirt, trousers, black shoes and sport coat. Simple, right?) Should I stop for a cup of coffee on the way into work? But sometimes even these small decisions are bigger than we think. For example, just stopping for that coffee, you might bump into and meet the love of your life. Wearing the green shirt might impress your boss and make her choose you for a new position with the company. I don't know what the socks would do for you!

Not every decision we make is life changing, though the potential is always lurking in the background. Some folks are paralyzed by this realization and procrastinate until the time is way past and you miss out on your chance or opportunity. (*I know I have been guilty of this more than a few times*) As we all know and the stores remind us each week, *'sales come to an end so you better make up your mind and decide one way or another!'* Not to decide is to decide.

The problem is, especially with those big decisions in life, that we would like some guidance and direction. Sometimes we seek that out from a school counselor, or a friend. Actually, if you are quiet and just listen, perhaps when your mind gets uncluttered, you may find your answer. How about asking God?

For the disciples, they had lots of teachings that they heard from Jesus *first hand* and they saw him perform miracles, yet something more was required to *"seal the deal,"* and give them

the inspiration and motivation to carry on and walk with Him the rest of the way.

Consider what happens next on the mount of the transfiguration:

“A voice came from the cloud, saying, ‘This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.’” The whole experience was life changing for them. Jesus was changed in appearance in their sight. And not just in appearance, but also in substance. Hearing the voice of God in that place and the words of God, who could help but find inspiration and motivation in these experiences?

What helps you make a decision? Why choose one over the other? Is God in or part of your decision making process? Is God behind it, revealing something new to you? Or is it just random, like water racing down a hillside, trying to find the path of least resistance? I believe God is always involved with our decisions, presenting us with transfiguring moments and experiences to reveal to us the right direction to choose. Sometimes this is as *direct* as the disciples, Peter, James and John, experienced this morning. At other times it is like a *gentle persuasion*, as light as the wind, so much so, you could miss it if you are not as mindful as you might be. Being present to God in regular prayer can help make this difference. Slowing down to smell the coffee and the flowers can also help to do it.

I believe this is true, because what we are about to witness is the implanting of this Spirit, this seed of God, this ember into little Theodore [our Baptismal Candidate this morning!]. This ember is like a spark that can well up to a fire of passion if stoked and nurtured. This spark, which we impart today, is like the element in a pizo-electric lighter, like the ones you use to

light a barbecue grill, or the ones that click when you light a gas stove in your kitchen. The spark is so tiny it is almost impossible to see, except perhaps if you turn out all the lights and watch very closely. Yet this little spark can ignite the flames on a stovetop, or start a great fire in an outdoor fire pit. Imagine what it can do in your spiritual life...

Theodore's family has decided and chosen today to place this spark in this new life. And in a few moments, this community of faith will affirm that decision together in word and deed. Remember the spark inside you. Allow it to transfigure your life. Walk with God, you are not alone in this life. God is closer to you than you think. Slow down, listen, look, be present to today, and pray. You will find answers to your prayers, and guidance and direction in the way. AMEN