

St Pius & St Anthony Homily 2nd Sunday of Lent Year C (2025)

In high school, I worked at the airport, maintenance dept, and I was given a little painting job one morning. As lunch came near, my supervisor approached and said he wanted me to come along, on an errand with him, and we'd eat lunch on the way. He told me the paint job would wait on me. So instead of cleaning, washing up the brush, I simply poured some mineral spirits into a cup, and left it up on workbench and took off with him.

When I came back and walked into shop, I thought "Hey, who took my brush, where is it?" Now, I hadn't learned this yet, I put the brush in a (Big Gulp) Styrofoam cup, and so the mineral spirits had completely melted away the cup and only the brush was left, just lying flat on the tabletop! Cup completely gone, except for a smear of liquid puddled on benchtop! I did not expect that! What a change and transformation-it disappeared like a snowman in July (*Like a box of those biodegradable packing peanuts, some co-workers and I were fascinated by one time, as we kept holding them under running water, watching them dissolve completely away, like the time we wasted, until the boss noticed too and sent us back to work!*)

I'd loved to have watched a time-lapse of that event of the paint cup shrinking into the tabletop surface. Or another time I walked into a chapel at I school I taught at, and thought "What gives, who stole the Paschal Candle?", as up by the font was simply the brass stand, and when I walked closer I saw the brass metal runner top lying on the floor, and realized that someone must have left it burning for a week, and it had just burned completely through and out (thank goodness the hot runner did not light the floor on its way out.....)!

Well, the transformation of Jesus in an opposite direction from a small simple human on a hillside, to a glorious divinity shining out and through everything in creation around it, that happened right before the eyes of Peter, James John (Jesus' future apostle leaders), was just as surprising, but way more purposeful and good! On Mt Tabor, Jesus reveals His divine identity to Peter James John-His apostle leaders, their as very God incarnate with/in front of them: The Revelation of Jesus-Divine God otherwise hiding in human flesh, right among us.

Jesus reveals this glimpse of His eternal omnipotent glory breaking into time in a flash. Scripture says 'His face changes and clothes are dazzlingly white' (Lk 9:29). But let's not be too caught up in the miraculous spectacle as gratuitous display of grandeur. Notice who appears /revealed with Him: **Moses & Elijah**- the two who are standing with Jesus **conversing** (Lk 9:30). What are they talking about? Luke 9:31 says they were 'spoke of his soon to come **exodus**'. They know a thing or two about exodus. Recall Moses' 40 year exodus through desert before coming to the promised land (*Numbers 32:13 or his 40 day trek on Mt Sinai-Ex 24:18*) and Elijah's 40 day journey through desert to Mt Horeb to encounter God, receive his

final anointing mission before his ride in fiery chariot to glory of heaven (1 Kings 19:8 & 2Kings 2:11)

Moses and Elijah both confirm the great company in which to view Jesus, but more importantly confirm His **role as the fulfillment and perfect embodiment of all they both represented** (Moses represents the written Law-commandments he brought down from the Mount, and Elijah represents the reforming spirit to take up when the law comes up short-seen in his compassionate service work feeding widow woman, & raising her only son to life again for her defense (1 Kings 17)

(Keep in mind that both Elijah and Moses have a fire connection too: they have purifying fire God epiphanies:1) Moses in bush (stationary) of fire first revealing God & 2) Elijah experiences the ongoing (moving fire) revelation of God's fiery chariot that carries us along with Him....)

But why does this event happen-transfiguration of Jesus?

1) It reveals who Jesus is, and 2) reveals what can happen to us, if we are in union with Him! What is ahead for us? I find that the transfiguration event is a midway point between baptism and resurrection. It looks back to Jesus' baptism and forward to His resurrection

First, the Baptism connection, Back in Luke 3:22 "and the holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, **"You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."** Then, this same phrase is echoed at Transfiguration as here in Luke 9:35 **"This is my chosen Son; listen to him."** (*'listen' is added this 2nd time: Had the apostles not been, or message was hard to hear?*)

Then later at the resurrection in Luke 24:4-6 "...behold, two men in dazzling garments appeared" to the women at the tomb announcing Jesus' rising. They say "Remember what he said to you..." (*there is that 'listen' to Him part again!*)

And in all three scenes, I find two witnesses to help the message of Jesus along. (*Are they the two witnesses that are referenced in the Book of Revelation 11:3?*)

1) At baptism, **two witnesses** of Father's voice and Holy Spirit Dove,

2) at transfiguration., **two witnesses** of Moses and Elijah, and

3) at Resurrection the **two witnesses** of men in dazzling garments.

Why the importance of witnesses? Because it is real and verifiable, not just the experience of God (that is just internal to us and selfish maybe) but additionally, our encounter with God can be reflected and shared with others by our changed behavior and changed life. Our commitments transform into callings, our words can transform into works. We witness to the Resurrected Christ by our changed life in Christ, reflecting, shining Him to others, through our conduct & interaction.

SO why today? Transfiguration story is our pep-fire rally to let us know what is possible through our Lenten spiritual exercise of prayer fasting and almsgiving. We can be changed for good, bettered by grace and lifted up out of what prevents our full flourishing. if last Sunday let us know what we are up against devil, then today lets us know what is possible! Yes, our change-our transformation into Christ!