

TRANSFIGURATION.

The fulfillment of Jesus mission was his death, he had to die for several reasons, to fulfill the prophecies, and free us from our sins.

So it is that in the Gospel today we come across Jesus as he is well into his saving mission and he has just started preparing his Disciples for his impending suffering and death.

Many biblical events occurred on a mountain, Elijah and Moses went there to communicate with God and in the gospel today Jesus James and John, are on the mount of transfiguration.

For the Jewish people God was most likely to be found on a mountain top under the cover of a cloud, as it was for Jesus on this occasion.

This meeting on the mountain was significant because of who was there. Jesus meets with his Father along with Elijah and Moses. Elijah represents the Prophets of old and their revelations. Moses represents the revelation of the law as received from God. Both prophets heard the voice of God and he entered into a covenant with them and the Jewish people.

With Jesus we have a different situation, he IS the revelation, He is revealed by God as his beloved Son, a glorious figure superior to Elijah and Moses.

The effect of this transfiguration was that the Peter, James, and John for a brief moment saw Jesus not in human form but transfigured in his divine glory. This glimpse of glory would show the disciples more of the infinite mystery of Jesus as God-with-us, and prepare them for the many strange things to come. But theirs will be a long and arduous journey to the point where their eyes are finally fully opened as they begin to understand Jesus message.

This gospel passage in describing Jesus' transfiguration also shows us a glimpse of the heavenly glory waiting for those who do God's will by putting their trusting faith in him. A transfiguration awaits all those who attain the glories of Heaven.

How then does Jesus transfiguration affect our lives? Just like the Apostles, the transfigured Jesus is there to strengthen our faith and help us on our journey and in all the trials we face along the way.

The Eucharist, when the bread and wine is transfigured and becomes the Body and Blood of Jesus, is our source of spiritual strength.

All the sacraments have a transforming affect on our lives
The first sacrament of initiation, Baptism, transforms us into sons and daughters of God, temples of the Holy Spirit and heirs to the kingdom of Heaven.

We become Christ like as we take Jesus into our lives

Peter ,James and John had a mountain top experience, where they were close to God, we all need that mountain top experience in our lives.

I experienced a mountain top experience in Slovakia when, some 15 years ago, I went up to the top of the Tatra Mountains, on the border of Poland, the highest mountain range in that part of Eastern Europe, In the quiet and still there I felt the presence of God.

Prior to entering formally into His mission Jesus spent 40 days in the desert experiencing hunger and trial.

Just like being on a mountain top this experience of being in the stillness and quiet of a desert, or a similar environment, can be another occasion of closeness to God.

Many of the early fathers of the church, like St Antony, found that the desert was the place where they were able to concentrate on their lives and vocation and feel the closeness of God in their lives.

In many respects we would all benefit from the experience of a mountain top, or desert, experience in our lives where free from all the distractions of our day to day lives we can open our hearts to the transfigured Jesus, allow Him into our lives and feel the full extent of His boundless love.

Recently I spent a week in the monastery at New Norcia where, in that environment, I was able to obtain some spiritual refurbishment.

Whilst we may not be able to find an actual mountain top, or a desert, we all need, to put time aside, to seek out our quiet places and open up to Jesus in prayer. And feel His love renewing our lives.