

HOMILY 2nd SUN LENT YRC 2019

Today in the Gospel reading we hear an account of the Transfiguration of Jesus. Transfiguration can be defined as: “A complete change of form or appearance into a more beautiful or spiritual state.” We all need to be transfigured as well, and we can be if we stay open to God’s presence in our lives. Our theme for Lent this year is “Rediscover the Power of the Sacraments.” Participation in the sacraments can transform us, but we have to participate in the sacraments and be open to the presence of God in our lives through the sacraments.

The sacrament that we celebrate most often is the Eucharist. I want everyone to go back to the day of their First Communion. I bet that most of you have a very vivid memory of that day, how you felt, where you were, what you did. And most of us received our First Communion as children and for many of us it was a long time ago. When was the last time that you felt that way at Mass? We celebrate Mass so frequently that sometimes it seem routine or boring. Next weekend we are going to have a teaching Mass. I will pause periodically to explain what it about to happen or what has just happened. Hopefully this will remind you of the richness of the Mass. Some of you have requested that I celebrate a teaching Mass because there are people who have been away from the Church or are not Catholic that you would like to invite. Next weekend is the weekend. In the past when I had been away from church for a while, I would feel kind of lost. Coming back to Mass would change that. Not that everything in my life would suddenly be straightened out, but I would feel reconnected to God. I would have a sense of peace and direction. I would be transfigured. When I was ordained I was a little worried that I would get tired of celebrating Mass. Well, I have been ordained almost 16 years and I have never been bored.

We can connect with God in a special way through Eucharistic Adoration. During Eucharistic Adoration I have had an overwhelming sense of God’s presence being enveloped in his unconditional love. One time I was struggling with an important decision in my life and I spent all day in adoration with no sense of time. It could have been ½ hour but it was all day. I was pretty much on another plane. I was transfigured by these experiences. I spend time in Eucharistic Adoration every week. These experiences do not happen frequently, but they happened when I needed them. If you never come to Eucharistic Adoration you will never experience the transfiguration.

Baptism is another Sacrament that transfigures you forever. Once you are baptized Catholic you will always be a baptized Catholic. Most of us were baptized as infants so we do not remember our baptism, but sometimes I can see how parents are transfigured by their child's baptism. Sometimes the parents are just glowing. They know they have done something very important for their child and it transfigures them. We have a group of our youth that are preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation on March 26th. I read all of the letters they wrote to me expressing why they want to be confirmed. They are very aware of the fact that most of them did not choose to be baptized but they are all choosing to be confirmed. They are anticipating the transfiguration they will experience in the sacrament by being strengthened by the Holy Spirit to live their lives using their gifts to love and serve other. Let's pray for them that they receive the transfiguration that can come from Confirmation.

I was never happier in my life than I was on the day of my ordination to the priesthood. I was transfigured in a major way that day and my life will never be the same. I see some couples on their wedding day are transfigured. They are joined together spiritually and their lives will never be the same. I have also seen couples married on the beach with a witness that got his authority to witness the wedding on the internet. Believe me there was something missing.

I have seen people transfigured though the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. I anoint many people shortly before they die. Some of them are restless and agitated before the anointing and are very peaceful afterward. The families later tell me that they remained in that peace and died peacefully. I suggest that you not wait until shortly before death to be anointed. You can be anointed whenever you need healing. People have told me about spiritual, emotional and physical healing through the Sacrament. They are transfigured. I have also seen people transfigured by the Sacrament of Reconciliation, particularly people who have been away from the Church for a while or have done something that is greatly troubling to them. There is something very powerful about confessing this to a priest in a safe environment and being forgiven by God. It helps us to forgive ourselves and to move forward with our lives. Rediscover the power of the Sacraments.