

REFLECTION

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"While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white." - Luke 9:28B-36

After reading today's Gospel, I decided to look up the meaning of the word

"Transfiguration" and the definition that stared back at me was: "a complete change of form or appearance into a more beautiful or spiritual state." So on this Second Sunday of Lent I dare ask, "Are we transfigured when we pray?"

According to author Matthew Henry's commentary on this scripture, "Jesus put an honor upon the duty of prayer and to recommend it to us. It is a transfiguring, transforming duty..." I also found a quote by Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard that says, "prayer does not change God, but it changes him [/her] who prays." Do you go to prayer burdened and come out still burdened? Do you go to Mass troubled and leave overburdened by the weight of that which you carried to Mass, and more? Once more Matthew Henry states that, "By prayer we fetch in the wisdom, grace, and joy, which make the face to shine..." just as Jesus shone, or glowed, in prayer.

Today, Jesus sets an example in prayer for us in this Lenten season - He seems to be summarizing it all saying: "do not just walk with me (these forty days in the wilderness) or just give alms (feeding thousands, washing the feet of others) because Lent requires it; but do it with the kind of prayer that transforms you as you journey with Me towards the cross and beyond the cross." Be transfigured in and by prayer so that the world around you sees God's glory, just as the fully awake disciples saw Jesus' glory.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus — Most often there are so many things I would like to tell you about - even though You see and know it all already. Teach me to pray for others and myself so that we be transfigured just as You were on the mountain. May Your glory shine through us by the joy You fill our hearts with. Use us to bring peace, joy and the warmth of Your love to Your children; help us see Your glory in everyone and in everything around us because You made them in Your image and likeness. Thank You for the encouragement and strength and for the transforming power of Your love that made You go to the cross for our sake. Amen!

Focus: SPIRITUALITY

Although Jesus spent most times on the mountain in prayer, I wonder if words ever evaded Him when He needed it the most (as it seemed to have happened on that night on the Mount of Olives before His arrest). These days, I think it is sometimes easier to find and read so many quotes and books on prayer than it is to actually find the words to pray; but as Mahatma Gandhi once stated, "In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart." I find that some of the most tranquil and transforming times I have had in prayer are the struggle-for-words-moments where I just sat still before the Blessed Sacrament or the altar and allowed God to 'pick the words from my heart'. I tell myself and others that, "let your life and existence and countenance be your prayer to God, so that you will have used the whole day in prayer."

WHO INSPIRES YOU TO SERVE?

Mother Teresa of Calcutta did not just pray but lived out her prayer in everything she did. I believe that she is one of the best examples of transfiguring prayer- the kind of life we are to live when we descend our own Mount Tabors. Mother Teresa "devoted her life to serving the poor and destitute around the world. ...she founded the Missionaries of Charity...devoted to helping those in great need. ...became a symbol of charitable selfless work." (Pettinger, Tejvan. "Biography of Mother Teresa"). She gives us an example of how prayer transforms us and changes our hearts to see the world through God's eyes and to serve others not because of what they can offer us in return. She is a symbol of God's love and God's heart to the world- she inspires me to serve wholeheartedly and to pray by not asking for things from God all the time but to "put myself in God's hands, at this disposition (of prayer), and listen to His voice in the depths of my heart." She inspires me to be the heart, hands and feet of Jesus in a broken world, and to love expecting nothing in return.