

## **Reflection on St. Mark's Gospel 9: 2-10**

- The Gospel passage we just heard is frequently referred to as the Transfiguration (Change) of Jesus.
- As we reflect on this Gospel passage, I suggest we consider the possibility that more than just Jesus changed on that mountaintop on that day.
- In our Gospel reading today, Jesus takes Peter, James and John up on a mountain to pray and these disciples are given a fantastic experience. A special revelation from God. But to understand why they were given this gift, we need to know what was going on just before they went up on that mountain.
- Jesus had begun His ministry and things were “heating up”. He was preaching and teaching and healing. And he sent His disciples to do the same. Many people began to follow Jesus and there was much speculation about who Jesus was. King Herod thought Jesus was John the Baptist back from the dead.
- Jesus was aware of the speculation so He asked His disciples the question: “Who do people say that I am?” They answered Jesus honestly: “Some say Moses, some say Elijah”. Obviously there was confusion among the people.
- Then Jesus asked His disciples: “Who do you say I am?” Peter tells Jesus “You are the Christ, the Messiah”.
- Jesus seizes that moment of faith and desire by Peter to teach him and the other disciples exactly what the Messiah is all about and what He asks of His followers.
- Jesus tells them: I’m going to live life a certain way; value certain things; have a certain attitude toward the world - where loving God and others is the top priority. Jesus tells them He will be criticized, rejected and

eventually put to death to silence Him and His teachings.

- Then Jesus makes them a promise: If you put your faith in me, trust me; if you change your life to become more like mine – I promise you a share in the Kingdom of God! And I promise to help you make this change.
- In today's Gospel passage we see that promise Jesus made, confirmed by God the Father. On that mountain they are given a sign that they have put their faith in the right place. A sign letting them know they can trust in what Jesus is telling them.
- Jesus promised His disciples that His death would lead to glory. On that mountain they get a glimpse of that glory. They experience a piece/peace of heaven. They see Jesus transformed before their eyes –they see Jesus' true identity, the Son of God, shine forth. So wonderful an experience they didn't want it to end. They wanted to set up tents and stay.
- But more than Jesus changed on that mountain that day. Jesus' transformation was meant to change those disciples. It was meant to give hope to Peter, James and John. To give them strength to live through what lay ahead –Jesus' arrest, crucifixion and death. And to let them know something good was waiting beyond that. To assure them Jesus had to leave this world to enter into the glory that was ahead.
- God confirmed to them: "This is my beloved Son". There was to be no confusion. Moses and Elijah were great men, great prophets – but Jesus is more. He is God's Son. That day the disciples received a promise of future glory and an assurance that if they trusted and followed Jesus, God would not let them down.
- In a very real way that experience changed them. Made them stronger, more confident followers. This was a critical change because they would be the ones left here.

They would be counted on to build God's Kingdom starting here and now.

- This experience of Jesus; this assurance of a share in God's Kingdom; this call to change was not limited to those first disciples: we are called to these things as well.
- If we trust, if we follow Jesus, if we change our lives to be more like His – we too will share in God's Kingdom.
- This is the joy-filled message on this Feast of the Transfiguration: Change is possible for each one of us!
- We can change too! We have a true identity, a holiness waiting to shine brightly. We can become more like Jesus – if we want to.
- So how do we do this? How do we answer this call to change? I'd offer four steps.
- First, believe. Believe that God created us, thinks about us, loves us. Believe His Spirit is always at work in us. Believe there is a law God writes on each of our hearts. A law that tells us who we are and what we are created for. Here is that law: Love God and love each other. Believe that to be fully happy this is the law that must guide us. And believe God wants to be intimately involved in our lives – believe that a loving day-to-day relationship with God is possible.
- Second, see. See God's presence in your life. We may not experience the type of revelation those disciples experienced on that mountain, but God is constantly revealing Himself to us in the world around us. All we have to do is look and see.
- See God in each other. Realize the Holy Spirit dwells in each one of us. And each person is an instrument through whom God works to bring His presence and love into the world. See God in your children as the promise of new life. See God in the love, reassurance, teaching and healing of our parents. See God in the love and support of your spouse. See God in the kindness of a

friend (or stranger). See God in the needy person you care for because that person gives you the opportunity to meet the Spirit of God welling in you – for it is God that prompts us to love and care for those in need.

- See God in the beauty of nature – sunrises, sunsets, snow, a soft rain – all we need to do is look and see. God is everywhere!
- Third, be open. We have many opportunities to receive Jesus' life changing grace. Give in to it!!
- It starts with prayer. Notice the transformation experience in today's Gospel started with Jesus taking the disciples to a quiet place to pray. We need to let Jesus take us there too.
- Prayer changes us. It allows us to reflect on things going on in our lives. In prayer we learn of God's presence and purpose in the people and events of our life. Prayer refreshes us; re-focuses us and changes us.
- Jesus realizes life is full of challenges. He lived it. He understands. He knows we are not perfect, knows we stumble along our journey. So He waits for us in the Sacrament of Penance. Here Jesus changes our souls: cleansing them from sin and strengthening us to avoid temptation and sin. Penance changes us – be open to it.
- In a special way Jesus waits to meet us in the Holy Eucharist. It is there we receive Him and He changes us to become more and more like Him.
- Fourth, become His presence. The final step in answering God's call to change is to become God's presence to others. We have to let our souls shine brightly so people can see God lives in us. So they can feel God's presence and love. Kind words; helping hands; sharing our gifts and talents; telling others we love them, they are valuable.
- There are lots of ways to shine without our cloths glowing brightly.

- The Holy Spirit reminds us to really see ourselves as the eyes, ears, hands and heart of God in this world. Whether you are a priest, deacon, husband, wife, parent, child, single, religious -whatever- we are called to live that life with a passion, a fire, and a purpose of being God's presence in the world. As saint Therese reminded us: "Grow where you are planted" and "Practice simple acts with great love".
- I'd like to conclude this reflection by returning to the question I asked you to consider at the start of this reflection: Was it possible more than just Jesus changed on that mountain?
- You bet! Those three disciples did and so does everyone else that encounters Jesus – we change and always for the better.