

Daily Readings and Reflections

Month of Mini-Retreats

Week 4

The Transfiguration

Sunday, July 22

Reading

After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid." And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone.

Matthew 17:1-8

Reflection

Just before they describe Jesus' Transfiguration in their gospels, both Matthew and Luke recount Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah. The Catechism describes the connection between Peter's confession and Jesus' Transfiguration in this way: "For a moment Jesus discloses his divine glory, confirming Peter's confession. He also reveals that he will have to go by the way of the cross at Jerusalem in order to 'enter into his glory'." (CCC 555) Jesus reveals his glory to Peter, James, and John so that they might remember it during his Passion and have confidence in his promise that he would be raised on the third day. Through our lives, Jesus reveals his glory to us also. He reveals it to us in smaller ways, but these mini-transfigurations help us to see Jesus more clearly and sustain us on our journey. This week we will reflect and meditate on how we respond when God's glory is revealed to us, the glory for which God has created us, and how our response to God's glory can continuously transform us into versions of ourselves that are ever closer to what God has created us to be.

Meditation

- In what ways has God revealed his glory to me?
- How did seeing this glimpse of God's glory give me confidence in my faith and strengthen me to continue forward as a Christian?

Monday, July 23

Reading

In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple. Seraphim were stationed above; each of them had six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they hovered.

One cried out to the other: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts! All the earth is filled with his glory!" At the sound of that cry, the frame of the door shook and the house was filled with smoke.

Then I said, "Woe is me, I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" Then one of the seraphim flew to me, holding an ember which he had taken with tongs from the altar. He touched my mouth with it. "See," he said, "now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed, your sin purged." Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" "Here I am," I said; "send me!"

Isaiah 6:1-8

Reflection

Just as the disciples did at the Transfiguration, when Isaiah saw God in his glory, his first response was that of fear. He immediately recognized that no unclean thing could remain in God's presence. When God reveals some part of his glory to us, we too should be convicted of our sinfulness. But, as the disciples did, we should also hear Jesus telling us, "Rise, and do not be afraid." This is because our loving God has given us embers from the altar to remove our wickedness and sin. In confession, our priests (who serve at the altar) hear our sins and give us Jesus' forgiveness. When we receive the Eucharist (consecrated at the altar) we also receive forgiveness for our venial sins. Then we are able to respond to God's call by saying, "Here I am! Send me!" It is through the repeated conviction of our sinfulness, forgiveness from God, and our willingness to go forth in the name of Jesus that we are transformed. We are changed. We are renewed. We are one step closer to the glory God created us for.

Meditation

- How can I let go of my fear and face my sinful nature with the knowledge that forgiveness is available to me?
- Have I sought God's forgiveness through the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist?

Tuesday, July 24

Reading

You were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you once lived following the age of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the desires of our flesh, following the wishes of the flesh and the impulses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ (by grace you have been saved), raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast. For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.

Ephesians 2:1-10

Reflection

In this section of his letter to the the Ephesians, St. Paul describes more clearly what we reflected on yesterday. We all start out in sin but our God, whose love for us is immeasurable, provides us a path to forgiveness- His Son. It is through Jesus that we can truly know God's love, grace, and kindness. And why are we given this gift of salvation? When we proclaim, "Here I am! Send me," what does God send us into the world to do? He sends us to do the good works that he has prepared in advance. It is through these good works that the Light shines into the darkness and those who are still dead in their transgression come to know the great love God has for them. The good works he calls us to are not random, though. God brings people into our lives and allows us to encounter difficulties so that we may do the good works he has prepared in advance for us. Each of us is a unique creation, and it is precisely this uniqueness that God is using to touch the people he brings to us and help us through the difficulties we encounter. And through these relationships and difficulties we more fully realize the handiwork that we are made to be.

Meditation

In Psalms 139:14 David says,

"I praise you, because I am wonderfully made;

wonderful are your works!
My very self you know.”

Spend a few minutes meditating on how you are wonderfully made, on your uniqueness, and on the good works God is calling you to.

Wednesday, July 25

Reading

For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendant, heirs according to the promise. I mean that as long as the heir is not of age, he is no different from a slave, although he is the owner of everything, but he is under the supervision of guardians and administrators until the date set by his father. In the same way we also, when we were not of age, were enslaved to the elemental powers of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption. As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Galatians 3:26 - 4:7

Reflection

In the story of Creation, we read that, just before he created man, God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness.” (Genesis 1:26) We see here the first glimpse of the Triune God (“Let *us* make...”). We also see that we are made in the image and likeness of the Triune God. While the Trinity is one of the greatest mysteries of our faith, it also sheds light on our relationship with God. Just as God is Triune, so are we. He is Holy Spirit, we are spouses. (See readings and reflections for Week 2.) He is Father, we are sons and daughters. He is Son, we are brothers and sisters. Our Brother gave himself over to a cruel, torturous death so we could receive the adoption that the Father has longed for since the beginning of time. So when we are saved from our sinfulness and sent out to do good works, God is not sending us as servants. He is sending us as sons and daughters. We are not just creatures made by God, we are a family of siblings who have been ransomed by a kind and loving Father who sends us out to bring the rest of our brothers and sister home.

Meditation

- Do I let the imperfections in my relationship with my earthly father affect how I view my relationship with my Heavenly Father? If so, how can I open myself more completely to the love of the Father so that he can heal the hurts caused by my earthy relationships?
- Do I view the lost people around me as brothers and sisters in need of the Father’s love and mercy? How can I help them to come to the Father so that they might receive their adoption too?

Thursday, July 26

Reading

But I shall show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. For we know partially and we prophesy partially, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:13

Reflection

Our Father does not just send us out to do good works. He sends us to do them with great love. We are the handiwork of God, made with great love, and born into this time and place for a purpose. The way we infuse this love into our work, our relationships, and our words is part of our uniqueness and allows us to do the good works God has prepared for us. It is our love for the Father and for our brothers and sisters that allows us to do these good works in a manner pleasing to God. And it is our love that will open the eyes of our brothers and sisters who are still “enslaved to the elemental powers of the world.” It is our love of God that reassures us in our faith with hope. It is our love of God that allows us to ponder the mysteries of our faith with wonder rather than despair. It is our love that gives us faith in the promises of Jesus and hope in the fact that one day we will fully know God as he fully knows us. On that day, our love will be made complete and we will understand our unique purpose in God’s plan. We will be able to view ourselves through God’s eyes, and we will know the immeasurable love he has had for us for all time.

Meditation

- Even though I may not always feel love, how can I increase my love for God each day through my actions?
- What is one way that I can carry out my daily duties with more love?

Friday, July 27

Reading

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith. For the sake of the joy that lay before him he endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God. Consider how he endured such opposition from sinners, in order that you may not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood. You have also forgotten the exhortation addressed to you as sons:

“My son, do not disdain the discipline of the Lord
or lose heart when reproved by him;
for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines;
he scourges every son he acknowledges.”

Endure your trials as “discipline”; God treats you as sons. For what “son” is there whom his father does not discipline?

Hebrews 12:1-7

Reflection

Even though we are children of God, we struggle to love and do what is right. The fact is, we live in a sinful world that does its best to pull us away from our Father. We truly are running a race and the graces we receive in baptism direct our steps toward God; but sometimes we stumble, sometimes we fall, sometimes the race spectators throw stones at us, and so many times we look to God and ask, “Why?” The answer to that “Why?” is found in today’s reading. God allows us to suffer as a form of discipline because we are his children. Even though the world might try to sell us the lie that discipline is unloving, we know the truth. Undisciplined children grow into lost adults with no purpose and no direction. This is not God’s will for us. He loves us too much. He disciplines us so that we might be transformed even more closely into what he created us to be. And so that we don’t get discouraged, he gives us glimpses of his glory to sustain us, and he gives us a great “cloud of witnesses” to help us along the way.

Meditation

- How has recognizing God's glory and understanding that he has a plan for me helped me to endure struggles in my life?
- How have my brothers and sisters, either the saints in Heaven or other Christians on earth, helped me to return my focus to Jesus through my struggles?
- How can I help others in their struggles?

Saturday, July 28

Reading

For God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to bring to light the knowledge of the glory of God on the face of [Jesus] Christ. But we hold this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not constrained; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our body.

For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen; for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:6-10; 17-18

Reflection

As we reflected on yesterday, living as children of God in a sinful world is not easy. It is filled with struggles, but through our struggles our Father lovingly transforms us into what he has created us to be. But what is it that he created us to be? He created us to be like Jesus. We are created to be one with the Son in all things so that we might be one with the Father. Through the Holy Spirit the Transfiguration is made known to us in our hearts. The glory of God in Jesus lives within us. It allows us to recognize the good works the Father is calling us to and, through the Holy Spirit, to do those works with the love of Jesus. It allows us to receive the Father's discipline humbly for the sake of the joy that lays before us. And what is this joy? It is the "glory beyond all comparison" that is "eternal." Through the Holy Spirit the knowledge of this glory shines forth from our hearts allowing us to be transfigured ever more closely to Jesus. Because of this, we can always take hope in the knowledge that the momentary suffering we experience in these earthen vessels is nothing compared to the glory in which we will share when we are fully united to God for eternity.

Meditation

- Do I need to recalibrate my perspective on life so that I focus less on the things that are temporary and more on the things that are eternal?
- How can I find hope each day in knowing that I have been chosen by the Father to share in the glory of Jesus for all eternity?