



Things to Ponder

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Second Sunday of Lent – February 21, 2016

Dear Parish Family,

There are some few experiences in life where time seems to stand still and we are caught up in the moment. The Greeks call these *kairos* moments as opposed to the normal passage of time, known as *chronos* (from which we get the English word *chronology*). What have been *kairos* moments for you? There are some common characteristics about moments of profound *awakening*. The first is that it is an *awakening*; both Abram (in the first reading) and the select group of apostles (Peter, James, and John) had been drowsy. The second is our tendency to want to *hold on* to the experience:

“ .. let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”
(Luke 9,33)

Just as the apostles discovered, so do we, that these *kairos* moments are precisely that—*moments*. They are gone before we know it! Such is the nature of something that is *pure gift*! As humans, we naturally ponder the meaning of these profoundly memorable experiences. The Church continued to do the same—in the words of all three *synoptic gospels* (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). We re-tell this *Transfiguration* story every year on the second Sunday of Lent. Two aspects of this story can give us an insight as to its significance for us on our Lenten journey. The first has to do with what the patriarchs and the exalted Jesus were discussing—his *exodus*. His *Passover*, and, spiritually, ours, would be accomplished in Jerusalem. Secondly, the cloud that enveloped them all has profound significance. Rather than serve as a sign of confusion, the *cloud* in the Old Testament served as a sign of God’s presence. Moses went up into the *clouds* on the mountain to be *in communion* with God. The pillar of cloud stood over the *meeting tent* wherein was housed the ark. A famous anonymous 14th century mystical writing is entitled *The Cloud of Unknowing*. The work makes the point that when the seeker of God is totally bereft of thought and feeling that person may well be in closest union with God. All we can do is to dispose ourselves for this *unitive* experience; but we cannot make it happen. I wonder, however, if such mystical *union* is not experienced more than we recognize.

At this point in our Lenten journey, when the great resolve to pray, fast, and give alms is likely becoming very burdensome, we need to be reminded of the real source of our

strength. The *Transfiguration* might be called a moment of *illumination* during this time of *purification*. Waste a little extra of your precious time in a favorite place alone with God and see what happens. Perhaps you, too, will exclaim: “*it is good to be here!*”

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Bill Foley

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