

## Homily Rerun: August 6, 2017 ~ Fr Kachy THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD



What a grace for Peter and James and John to see Jesus transfigured. They got a preview of the glory of Jesus risen from the dead and his glory in heaven. It was also a preview of the glory we all hope to share in heaven. This was a very special grace for Peter and James and John. Jesus gave a unique experience to the three that none of the other Twelve would partake in.

It was not the only special grace Jesus shared with Peter, James and John. Earlier in the Gospel (Mark and Luke) we read that Jesus only allowed Peter, James and John with him into the house of the synagogue official whose daughter he raised up again (**Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51**). Later, when Jesus was teaching in the temple, Peter, James and John asked Jesus a question privately and he gave them more teaching (**Mark 13:3**). In Gethsemane, Jesus took Peter, James and John aside from the others to be near him during his agony (**Mark 14:33**). So Peter, James and John received many special graces from Jesus. **WHY PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN?**

The question we ask ourselves is that; “Why did Jesus pick Peter, James, and John to be His inner circle of ministry training? Any message for us today?” There are several explanations for this:

1. As an example effective leadership training. Jesus ministered to great crowds, but there was a group of a hundred or so who seemed to be following Him closely, including the wonderful women who supported the ministry in practical ways. Jesus selected the Twelve to specifically invest in as His apostles – to be His personal representatives. Jesus, showed us the importance of narrowing in on a smaller “inner circle” for the highest degree of intimate training and perfect leadership.
2. Peter, James, and John represent the extremes of the Twelve. Peter was the eldest, John was the youngest. James died first, John lived the longest. There are two wonderful lessons for us:
  - a) To Peter: “*Don’t think that your age qualifies you as a better leader—I’ve also selected the youngest as a leader.*” The fact that John was chosen as his peer should have humbled Peter to some degree. So don’t say “I’m too old or too young for ministry.
  - b) To James: “*Go big, then go home!*” Jesus invested Himself equally in James and John. John would go on to live for more than seven decades in ministry. What a fantastic investment by Jesus! But James? He only lasted a few years before he was martyred. Would Jesus have said, “What a waste?” Absolutely not! God doesn’t value our lives based on how *long* we live, but rather, by the fact that we *live for Him*. James’ value to the Kingdom of God was no less than John’s. The lesson is to “go big” for Jesus, no matter how much time He gives you.

In the past two weeks we have had in the liturgy a series of Jesus’ teachings in parables: The sower, the wheat and weeds, the mustard seed, the yeast, hidden treasure, very valuable pearl, a fishing net; in all these Jesus takes a tedious task to explain about the Kingdom of Heaven from different angles for us to understand. Sometimes they understood, sometimes they didn’t.

The transfiguration experience is in fact one of such parables, but this time in a practical visionary scene that gave some of the disciples a glimpse of the glory of the resurrection and glory of heaven. This time it worked. They didn’t want to leave the mountain top. In the Garden of Gethsemane the same disciples didn’t want to stay. When Jesus was arrested they all fled.

Jesus declined the offer by Peter of a free home and they had to go down the mountain because He still had the biggest lesson to teach them; that which He had been conversing with Moses and Elijah. We don’t stay at the mountain top and relax and wait to be glorified. We have to go down the mountain and engage in ministry so we can merit the beatific vision for all eternity. The glory of heaven – which is a fact – comes after the Paschal experience. We have to be fully involved in the very dynamics of the Passion of Christ.

The Mass is our mountain-top experience which prepares us for the trials of our day. The Mass is not a transfiguration but a transubstantiation, in which bread and wine are transformed into the glorious Risen Jesus. And in the joy and consolation of Communion we say with Peter, “Lord, it is good for us to be here.” And we do not want to leave. But it is not to be so. Soon we will hear the words, “The Mass is ended. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.” Doing what we are told after Mass is what will make us partakers in the admirable glory of Christ.

At His baptism in the Jordan the Father in heaven had affirmed him, “This is my beloved Son in whom my favor rests” (**Matthew 3:17**). Now he says, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him” (**Matthew 17:5**).”