

Two weeks ago, I talked about Dimension 5+ and how we can no more imagine what it is like to live outside of the space/time continuum than a fish can imagine living out of water. Both mean death, death to life as we, or the fish, know it. But we get glimpses. We get glimpses of a different reality – a reality we call heaven where the reign of God is 100% realized.

Today's gospel reading shows Jesus and the three disciples getting a taste of that other world. Here, Moses and Elijah are still alive, here Christ is so full of God that the disciples can see him transfigured, "and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them." When Moses went up the mountain and communed with God, his face became so full of light that other people couldn't look at him – but this isn't just Jesus' face, it's his clothes as well. He becomes somehow quite different because in that moment the veil between the dimensions is removed... until oh so quickly the cloud comes down and the moment passes.

Yet in those few moments, the disciples glimpsed something they will never forget – they glimpsed another dimension. They glimpsed the reality of Christ in his fullness.

The early church understood that Christ is manifest in creation. As the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins put it "Christ plays in ten thousand places." Christ plays in ten thousand places and that includes in you and me and our neighbor. The Apostle Paul understood Christ to be the first of many siblings who would be his Body in the world. Jesus himself told his disciples that they would be able to do what he did.

So I want to suggest to you this morning that transfiguration may not be something that only happened for Moses and then for Jesus. Because if transfiguration is nothing more than the sudden revealing of God's presence, the revelation of the reality that is being played out in Dimension 5+; if transfiguration happens when Christ's true nature is

seen then transfiguration can happen any time anywhere, any of the ten thousand places where Christ plays.

I am sure that you will have had an experience of going to a church or a beautiful natural place and feeling that this is a special place, a place where God is close. There is something about a building that has been prayed in over many years – it becomes resonant with prayer and the spirit of God. I have been thinking that we as individuals, as couples, families, households, may also become resonant with the presence of God. We are used to God's presence coming close to us as we gather and share in the sacraments but God also comes close to us when we are physically distant from one another. And when we invite God and cultivate that presence, God is gracious to accept our invitation and come even closer.

We sometimes think that prayer is about asking for things. No, prayer is about cultivating the presence of God so that we may live the reign of God here and now.

I was in a meeting yesterday with almost a hundred people from around the world – many of whom I knew in our idealistic 20s and 30s. One of them was saying that he no longer thinks the metaphor of a network of light which links those who are working to manifest spirit in their lives is particularly useful. For me it is the opposite – I have a growing sense of being connected to each of you and to those people of goodwill who are working for the common good – who are working to manifest the love of God as they understand God – who are the more than ten thousand places where Christ plays. And it works for me to think of it as being like a network of light.

The connection we have to the Christ through the Holy Spirit links us with all of humanity, indeed with all of creation, just like a rock in a river is linked with the whole of the river by the water pouring over and around it. And the connection we have to the Christ through the Holy Spirit links us with heaven.

I think we can consciously cultivate the presence of God so that wherever we go God is felt, just like in a great cathedral or a monastery chapel. That is what I long for, what I pray for daily, that I may be walking so closely with God, so rooted in Christ in creation, that God's presence may pervade the space around me like a beautiful perfume; so that the space may be opened for miracles to happen and for all beings to be drawn closer to God. Holiness is not about being good, it is about being filled with Christ. Imagine, imagine how it might be if through the grace of God wherever you went those around you found themselves strangely touched, found their hearts warmed, found themselves thinking about God in a new life-sustaining way.

You will remember the account that Thomas Merton gives of suddenly understanding that we are not separate. He wrote,

“In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all these people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness, of spurious self-isolation in a special world. . . .

This sense of liberation from an illusory difference was such a relief and such a joy to me that I almost laughed out loud. . . . I have the immense joy of being man, a member of a race in which God Himself became incarnate. As if the sorrows and stupidities of the human condition could overwhelm me, now that I realize what we all are. And if only everybody could realize this! But it cannot be explained. There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun.

Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor

self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes. If only they could all see themselves as they really are"¹

If only we could see ourselves and each other as we really are. That is transfiguration.

So maybe transfiguration is also in the eye of the beholder – when we can see the Christ in one another with God's eyes, then we see the beauty and the grace, then others are transfigured and made beautiful in our eyes because they are beautiful to God.

In our baptismal vow we promise to seek and serve Christ in all persons – that means looking for the beauty – looking for the Christ who is playing there. We are transfigured when we are centered in Christ and radiating God's love; others are transfigured when we see them as God's beloved.

It is not easy, it takes work, but we are not alone. We are not alone in seeking to live the reality of Dimension 5+ here and now. We are part of a great communion of saints, a vast network of light where the little light that we can radiate connects with others and with the Christ-life, and so the grace of God, the abundant astonishing unconditional love of God which brought this whole experiment into being, and which led God to experience death to bring us into life; that amazing grace of God gets shared and our knowledge of it grows and grows until we are indeed living heaven on earth.

¹ Thomas Merton Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/2464342-in-louisville-at-the-corner-of-fourth-and-walnut-in>