

February 21, 2016
2nd Sunday of Lent C

**A cloud came over them, and they became frightened.
And a voice said, “This is my Son; listen to him.”**

*Transfiguration is not about becoming sacred, it is about recognizing what we already are.
Transfiguration is not about becoming more spiritual, it is about becoming more human.*

Background

Franciscan Father Richard Rohr offered in one of his daily meditations this week a commentary that serves well as a background for what we will be considering today.

“The history of almost every religion begins with one massive misperception; it begins by making a fatal distinction between the sacred and the profane. Low-level religions put all their emphasis on creating sacred places, sacred time, and sacred actions. As much as there is a need for this, it unfortunately leaves the majority of life “un-sacred.” I remember reading about an Irish missionary’s attempt to teach the Masai people about the Catholic Sacraments. The missionary said that a sacrament is a physical encounter with Grace or the Holy. The people were disappointed when they were told there were only seven such moments. One Masai elder raised his hand and said, ‘We would have thought, Father, there would be at least seven thousand such moments, not just seven.’

Any clear distinction between sacred and profane must quickly fall apart. We don’t have to go to sacred places to pray or wait for holy days for good things to happen. We can pray always and everywhere. Everything that happens is sacred.”

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Sometimes this vision doesn’t seem to work very well. Look at our world. None of it seems very sacred. We find ourselves operating out of fear and scarcity rather than trust and abundance. This stingy, calculating un-Transfigured worldview makes both grace and mercy unimaginable and difficult to experience.

Neuroscience can now demonstrate the brain indeed has *a negative bias*; the brain prefers to constellate around fearful, negative, or problematic situations. This has enormous implications for individuals and society. When the clouds of self-centeredness come over us, we become afraid and cannot hear the voice that says:

“This is my Son; listen to him.”

But if our attitudes and values reflect what Jesus said and did, then there is great hope of ourselves and the world being Transfigured by Christ. For example:

- † The Transfigured move towards love, help the helpless, forgive those who hurt them, and do not demean those who disagree with them
- † The Transfigured care for the earth, reach out to those who do not look or talk like them, and care about unborn Middle-Eastern babies as much as unborn American babies
- † The Transfigured help families who sneak across our borders for fear of their lives, are concerned about undocumented housekeepers at hotels being safe from deportation if they don't provide sexual favors, and do "not" prefer political and economic systems over people
- † The Transfigured are more concerned about what they are for than what they are against

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If however our attitudes and values do "not" reflect what Jesus said and did, then there is little hope of ourselves and the world being Transfigured by Christ. For example:

- † The Untransfigured slide towards hate, do not help the helpless, do not forgive those who hurt them, and demean those who disagree with them
- † The Untransfigured show no concern for the earth, do not want to reach out to help those who don't look or talk like them, and are less concerned about unborn Middle-Eastern babies than they are about unborn American babies
- † The Untransfigured remain indifferent to families who sneak across our borders for fear of their lives, do not care about undocumented housekeepers at hotels being threatened with deportation if they don't provide sexual favors, and place political and economic systems above people
- † The Untransfigured are more concerned about what they are against than what they are for

*Transfiguration is not about becoming sacred, it is about recognizing that we already are.
Transfiguration is not about becoming more spiritual, it is about becoming more human.*

What happens in our society reflects our attitudes and values. The sooner we allow ourselves to be Transfigured by Christ, the sooner our world will desire peace more than it does war. Once we accept that God is in all situations and that everything is sacred - friend and foe alike, then the clouds will disappear, we will cease to be afraid, and we will hear a voice say,

"This is my Son; you have been listening to him."