

**Homily – Luke 9: 28 – 36**  
**Second Sunday of Lent, Year C**  
**12<sup>th</sup> March 2022, Riverstown – Vigil Mass**

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There is a story in the Bible of how the Syrian army moved in, by night and surrounded a city in which Elisha, a prophet of God was staying. Their purpose was to capture Elisha because he was using his prophetic powers, to render intelligence services to the king of Israel. Elisha's servant Gehazi woke up in the morning to discover, that they had been caged in by the enemy forces and was naturally overtaken by fear and doubt. How would the man of God pull through this? When Elisha saw how Gehazi was panicking he tried to calm him down, by saying to him, "Fear not, for those who are on our side are more than those on their side". But who would believe that? So, Elisha prayed to His God, "O Lord, please, open his eyes that he may see". And God opened the eyes of Gehazi and he saw that the entire surrounding mountainside was full of horses and chariots of fire forming a protective wall around Elisha. His fears were allayed. Well, at the end of the story, not only was the prophet of God safe, but the invading army was totally humiliated.

Now, the Transfiguration scene described in today's Gospel which we just listened to, was in a way intended

to have a similar effect on Peter and the other apostles who were really afraid for their master's safety in the context of the growing hatred against and opposition to Jesus.

In the Transfiguration account in today's Gospel, Jesus is revealed as a glorious figure, superior to Moses and Elijah who appear with Him. And He is identified by the Heavenly Voice as the beloved Son of God. Thus, the Transfiguration experience is a Christophany, that is, a manifestation or revelation of who Jesus really is. Needless to say, describing Jesus' Transfiguration, the Gospel gives us a glimpse of the Heavenly glory waiting for those who do God's will by putting their trusting Faith in Him.

Now, the story of the Transfiguration of Jesus would remind us that we need "*mountain-top experiences*" in our lives: And we share the mountain-top experience of Peter, James, and John when we spend extra time in prayer during this season of Lent.

Albert Schweitzer said that one of the main things his parents did for him as a child was to take him to Church services, Liturgical services or worship services, even though he was too young to understand much of what was going on. He claimed that it is not important that

children understand everything. What is important is this; “that they shall feel something of what is serious and solemn....” — Can you see Peter, James, and John as they contemplated what it meant to be in the presence not only of Jesus but also Elijah and Moses, and then on top of all that, to hear the Voice of God as well? No wonder they were silent! Here was dust encountering Divinity, the temporal in the presence of the eternal, the imperfect face to face with Holiness itself. Well, ‘How we need such experiences today’! Such experiences demand silence. Such experiences demand prayer or union with God which will lead us to be in union with our brothers and sisters.

As you know, the word transfiguration means a change in form or appearance. Biologists call it metamorphosis to describe the change that occurs when a caterpillar becomes a butterfly. As children we might have or we would have curiously watched the process of the caterpillar turning into a chrysalis and then bursting into a beautiful Monarch butterfly. Fr. Anthony de Mello, a Jesuit priest from India tells the story of such a metamorphosis in the prayer life of an old man. Well, the old man would whisper thus: “I was a revolutionary when I was young and all my prayer to God was: ‘Lord, give me the grace to change the world.’ As I approached middle age and realized that half of my life was gone

without changing a single soul, I changed my prayer too: ‘Lord, give me the grace to change all those who come in contact with me; just my family and friends and I shall be satisfied.’ And now that I am old and my days are numbered, I have begun to see how foolish I have been. Well, my one and only prayer now is this: ‘Lord, give me the grace to change myself.’ And looking back I feel, if I had prayed for this right from the start, I should not have wasted my life.”

Well, this season of Lent calls each of us to change which indeed is difficult. Remember: The testimony of our life is what will draw or repel others to the Lord or from the Lord. It is all done without us saying a word.

As Saint Paul tells us, let us stand firm in the Lord so as to be changed, transformed, by His power, by His strength and by His grace.

God bless you all, Amen.