

Fr. John Sassani
Homily Given February 17, 2008
Second Sunday of Lent - Liturgical Year A

My second oldest nephew Michael is now serving in the United States Air Force. He is a wonderful young man, but, when he was in high school, it was not always able to be seen. He often wore a t-shirt, ripped and frayed jeans, untied work boots, and two days of a beard. I went home to visit one night, and Michael was not joining us for dinner. He was about to leave the house in a collared shirt, slacks, shoes, and with a clean-shaven face. "What happened to you?" I asked. "Whaddaya mean?" he replied. I turned to his sister, my niece, who told me he had a girlfriend now. The young woman, whoever she was, had a profound effect on him, and it was noticeable.

The ongoing relationship between God the Father and Jesus his Son was constant and sustained, but now Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem for the last time. He goes with Peter, James, and John to pray. While praying, the Father's love overwhelms Jesus – he's visibly changed – he's radiant – the radiance of love. The Father speaks: This is my son. Listen to him.

The disciples have seen the miracles, have witnessed the healings, have heard the preaching, and they were drawn to Christ as a great rabbi – but nothing prepared them for this. It's a glimpse of the Resurrection, of Christ's new life and of their new life in him.

As he was transfigured, they would be transformed by his love: on the cross, in the new life of the Resurrection, and with the power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. What they couldn't tell coming down the mountain they can't keep from telling after the Resurrection: that Jesus is the Lord, that he's robbed sin and death of its power and given us new life and a destiny.

Vital spirituality is a goal for our parish, a spirituality rooted in the vitality of Christ, grounded in listening to his Word. Lent is a time to grow in the love of Christ through the Word. This Lenten season, we offer to you a booklet called Pray with Our Lady's to encourage this, especially to consider the Gospel, so his radiant vitality lifts our spirits and prepares us to tell the vision of new life to others.

As we gather for the Eucharist today and every Sunday and as we hear the Word, Christ is transfigured in Bread and Wine so that he can transform us into his Body to draw others into the love of God through us.