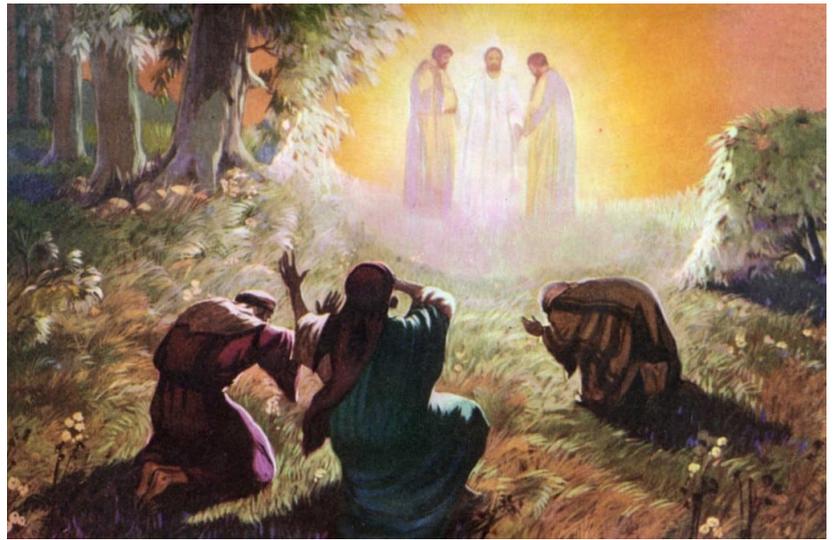


“Lord, it is good that we are here.” (Matthew 17:4)

My Dear and Precious Friends,

On this Second Sunday of Lent, we hear Matthew’s account of the Transfiguration of Our Lord. Peter, James and John are given the incredible grace to witness Jesus in all of His glory, dazzling and blinding in his appearance, conversing with Moses and Elijah. When Peter is finally able to speak, his first words are “Lord, it is good that we are here.” This simple phrase would be used by +Joseph Cardinal Bernardin at the beginning of just about any talk he would give at just about any gathering he would be speaking at. I always thought that it was fascinating that he would root his personal faith life so deeply in the



Transfiguration of Our Lord, and would use those words of Saint Peter as the foundation of his own words that were to follow. I often wondered if people realized that those simple words, “it is good for us to be here” were rooted in the Transfiguration. His deep and abiding faith had led him to understand that we are indeed transfigured by the glorious grace of our Lord Jesus whenever and wherever we gather to proclaim His Good News and continue His salvific work here on earth. In a very real sense, Moses and Elijah appear to remind us that we make a little bit of heaven happen right here in our midst whenever and wherever we gather in His Name.

As a result of Renew My Church, our parish and parishes across the whole archdiocese have been transfigured by the amazing grace and glory of Our Lord. It is indeed good for us to be here, to come together and to be together as we journey together on our pilgrim way to the Kingdom. As the logistics of the formation of our new parish slowly fade into the background, the building up of our new spiritual life together comes to the fore. Like Peter, James and John, we are given the incredible grace to bring our Lord Jesus into each other lives, and in so many acts of



love to make a little bit of heaven happen here in our midst. I believe with all of my heart that it is by no means an accident that we are here together at this moment in salvation history. Our Lord Jesus has put us exactly where He needs us exactly when He needs us here the most. My dear and precious father, +Herman Gotlieb Zwirn, was born on March 5th, 1916. It was the morning of March 5th, 2011, that Bishop Perry called me to continue my work as a pastor, ending my 12 1/2 years at Saint Tuiribius and beginning anew as pastor of Saint Anne Parish. After 11 years I would once again be called to continue my work, bringing the very best of my years of experience with me to help Father Edmond in his work as our pastor here at Saint John Neumann Parish. This March 5th, my father’s 107th birthday, the 12th anniversary of my call to Saint Anne, my first March 5th here with all of you, all I can say is that it is indeed good for us to be here! Like Peter, James and John, we are, all of us, witnesses to the marvelous, dazzling, blinding glory of Our Lord Jesus as it is given new life here in our new home together. May the powerful joy of our love for each other throw open the doors to our church and welcome in all those who are most in need of the power of that love in their lives. May we work diligently together in the days and months and years to come to transfigure ourselves, our church, and our whole community with the blinding, dazzling, glorious Love of Christ!!

In Awe and Wonder of the Power of God’s Love and Divine Mercy, your friend and brother always,

Father Ralph

*Father Ralph can be reached at (773) 599-9476.
Please remember to watch and subscribe to “Father Ralph’s Neighborhood” on YouTube*