

February 11, 2024
Transfiguration Sunday

Meditation *“Transformers”*

Have any of you with grandchildren ever seen one of the movies or toys about machines that can change from cars and trucks into robots and back again? Transformers they call them, but after taking a close look at the Merriam-Webster dictionary in my office though I would argue that they aren't really transformers at all. Transformation involves a change in character, composition, or essence. Nothing essential about the machines changed. Whether they are configured as vehicles or as robots, they are still machines. All that has changed is the form or the outward appearance of the machines, and that fits the definition of a transfiguration.

Up there on the mountaintop, in the presence of not one, not two, but three witnesses, Peter, James and John, Jesus was transfigured. His clothing became dazzlingly bright, but nothing essential about Jesus changed. Jesus remained who he was; a teacher, a healer, a miracle worker, a mystic. All that happened was that his appearance changed.

In the 'Transformers' movies, there is a battle against good Transformers and evil Transformers. The evil ones glorify their physical power, which feeds their giant-sized egos. On the other hand, Jesus' transfiguration wasn't about him at all. Jesus' transfiguration was for the benefit of the disciples who were with him. His appearing with Moses, the giver of the law, and Elijah, the greatest of the prophets, was an indication of Jesus' true identity. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt following the pillar of fire by night, and Moses had received the ten commandments on the top of the mountain that the people below saw as brightly glowing. Elijah was taken up into the heavens by the chariot of fire.

The pillar of fire, the glowing mountaintop, the chariot of fire; all are signs of the divine presence. And Jesus' brilliant appearance, that too is a sign of divine presence. Jesus knew who he was, his appearance was so that the disciples would see God's divine presence in Jesus.

If you think that's great, wait, there's more. The pillar of cloud that led Moses and the Israelites by day, the cloud that covered the mountaintop when Moses was receiving the law is also a sign of divine presence. The cloud that shrouded the mountaintop with Jesus and the three disciples was a sign of

God's presence not only in Jesus, but with Jesus and the disciples. All of this was for the benefit of the disciples so that their understanding of who Jesus was, their hearts and their lives might be transformed. Jesus might have been transfigured, but the disciples were transformed.

The disciples' role, their responsibility as witnesses was not only to be transformed personally, but then to go out and transform the people they met and to transform their society as a whole.

The church is made up of people whose lives have been transformed by an experience of the divine presence. And just like the disciples, our role, our responsibility is to transform the lives of those we meet, and of our society as a whole.

Play video clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNTQ0yVnN5Q&feature=youtu.be>

There is nothing wrong with acts of charity, like giving food to the foodbank, but charity alone does not transform lives. Did you hear what Jeff Neven said? The work they do, the work we do through them, transforms lives. Working with people, giving them the supports and the tools to change their lives is what transforms lives. It may be the work of teaching people life skills. It may be the work of changing unjust laws. It may be the work of changing structural injustices in our political and economic systems. Whatever it may be, it is a responsibility that has been entrusted to us by God; it is a responsibility that lasts our entire life through, ending only at death; it is a responsibility that we can only fulfill by the power and the grace of God who is ever with us.

And it's not just people's lives and our society that is in need of transformation, the church itself is at a transition point, a point of transformation. No, we won't be changing the essence of our faith. The creed – what we believe will not change. But what is changing is how we connect and how we share our faith. Can you think of examples of what has changed recently, and what needs to change? Can you think of what the church might look like in the future? Yes, it has a future, for the church is God's instrument for transforming the world, and God isn't done transforming the world yet. So, what might the church look like in the future? How will it work? Where will it work? How big will it be? What impact will it make?

Jesus was transfigured. In our baptisms and in our spiritual journeys we have been transformed. And, we are called to be transformers.