



The Feast of the Transfiguration 8.6.2017

Mo. Lynn Harrington at Trinity Church-Ossining

As you know, today we're celebrating the Feast of the Transfiguration, which my best friend describes as, "a lightning storm on a moonless night." You know how ---- in a night lightning storm --- everything is lit up, and you can see for miles? You see stuff that's otherwise shrouded in darkness.

The Transfiguration of Christ is like a lightning storm on a hot summer night. In it we see the *past, present, and future* all in *one blazing* flash of light. When that blaze of light illumines Mt. Tabor, *Peter, James, and John* see not only Jesus, but also the *prophets from the past* --- *Elijah and Moses*. They see *something else too* – in that blaze of light – they catch a glimpse of the Risen Christ.

Hence, the Orthodox Church calls the Transfiguration, "*little Easter*." Meaning that in the Transfiguration, we see what Jesus will look like as Risen Lord. Peter, seeing the glory of the illumined Christ– wants to *stay on the mountain*.

He wants to *build booths, live in the glory, and never descend to the muck and mire of life*. I love Peter! I am Peter!! Sadly, Peter generally gets it wrong!

On Mt. Tabor, Peter got things wrong on two counts. FIRST, because he wanted to build three booths – one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus – meaning that Peter was treating them as equals. God corrects Peter by saying, “*This is my ONLY son, my Chosen One, listen to him.*”

Luke just says, “*Peter didn’t know what he was saying!*” Again, you’ve got to love Peter! SECOND, Peter wanted to *stay* on the mountain and avoid suffering – he wanted the pure presence of God – the mystical glory.

Like Peter, I’d love to spend my whole day in prayerful devotion to our Risen Lord. My confessor calls that, “*spiritual gluttony!*” The bad news is that Jesus is clear – we need to come down from the mountain and deal with the pain of life. Like Peter, we all want to avoid that. Instead all we can do is share our pain with Christ and one another. BTW – sharing our pain with Christ and one another IS everything!

Here’s the good news: when we share our tough times with Christ -- then our passion/pain/suffering is strengthened by His Easter life. Here’s the point: Christ died to share our muck and mire. Christ died to transfigure our darkest time by joining us in it with His glorious Risen presence.

Meaning that Jesus’ power isn’t just in the future – it’s a present reality. Through the Holy Spirit – the glory of the Risen Christ is *present with us now* in our suffering. We don’t see His glory with us in our moonless nights – but its there --- waiting for the *lightening power of the Spirit to expose it*.

Here’s a story about the lightening power of the Holy Spirit. My late mother-in-law, Kitty, was one of the all-time holy people! She prayed without ceasing... and suffered terribly with incredibly painful crippling osteoarthritis.

One day shortly before her death – Kitty fell. She was inches away from her caregiver.... Kitty broke her knee on one leg and her ankle on the other leg. Pure agony...

I rushed to the ER and when I arrived I bent over to kiss her. I was wearing a long crucifix. Kitty grabbed it. Kissed Jesus hanging there on my crucifix – looked straight at Him and said, "*You suffered too!*" That's what transfigured life looks like in real life. Our life! That's what we need to trust in our dark nights.

So, remember Mt. Tabor in your next dark night. *Remember* the power that parted the water for Moses and killed the false prophets of Baal leaving Elijah in triumph. *Remember* that same power raised Jesus from the dead when ALL the world, Satan included, thought it had delivered a knock out punch to God.

Jesus said," not knowing the power of God ye do greatly err." Friends, *don't err.* In your bleak times, *remember* the Transfiguration and the power of God to bring light to your darkness. Ponder the prologue of John's Gospel: "*The light shines in darkness and the darkness has not overwhelmed it!*" That powerful light is why we sing "*Alleluia' at Easter!*"

Know that Easter's not a day – it's a lifestyle! Ask yourself –in this tumultuous time," *How're you doing with your Easter lifestyle??*

Are you standing up for all the people Jesus stood up for? I just saw a great tee shirt that said, "*Jesus was a panhandler!*" Think about it....I had to....

Like my mother-in law, Kitty, we can live like Easter people. We have Christ's Risen power. Now, "Saint," Mother Teresa knew a thing or three about Easter power – the power that overwhelms all darkness.

Here's what she has to say about it in her own words," *When I was crossing into the Gaza, I was asked at a check post if I was carrying any weapons."* I replied, "*Yes, my prayer books."*

If asked if you're carrying any weapons that should be your response. Prayer makes present the power of the Risen Christ. Prayer's the road map to your/my own transfiguration.

Every time you/we pray — it's a little Easter!

Here's what you need to remember: pray and let the lightening- like power of Christ transfigure the dark places in our world and in the dark places of your past, present and future. Amen