What does a truly transformed heart and mind look like? I think Maya Angelou talked about transformation very well when she referenced the butterfly. I love this quote...

“We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty. Isn’t this true? We often look at the butterfly or we look at a person without knowing what type of transformation they have gone through to get to where they are today.

The covenant of grace was a completely different notion for the time for the Jesus’ followers and for the people at large. This covenant of grace was extremely difficult for them to understand, because there were years of ancestors before them. Family and friends who were saying, “This is how we have practiced our religion for generations.” They struggled to understand the new covenant of grace through Jesus Christ.

Today, we are going to discuss the transformed mind and the transformed heart which we accessed through the covenant of grace. Let’s consider what are the causes of pre-curries of transformation?

In the butterfly’s case there is transformation on the cellular level. The genetic makeup of the butterfly is transformed from a caterpillar to a butterfly, something that it was not before. The transformation in us as Christ followers is different. Our outwardly body does not change, but we have a huge change within our hearts and minds.

John 3 speaks to this transformation. Nicodemus was ruler of the Jews and he was talking to Jesus. He said, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

This conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus gets at the heart of the matter of transformation, grace.

What is GRACE?

Merriam Webster defines grace in Christian belief as the free and unmerited favor of God, as manifested in the salvation of sinners and the bestowal of blessings.

I think Ephesians 2:8 sums it up even better.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

In other words, there is nothing we can do to earn grace. There’s nothing we do to deserve this grace. That’s what makes it so amazing. We all know the song Amazing Grace. That’s what makes grace something so unbelievable.

TRANSFORMATION BEGINS HERE

I know what that kind of unconditional grace and forgiveness feels like, although it’s difficult to articulate. Gods amazing grace and perfect love is not something to be earned or deserved. He gives grace and forgiveness to those who trust and accept Him. That’s where the transformation begins.

It’s hard to understand what grace is like so I like to illustrate the point with a trip to the Grand Canyon. If you have been to the Grand Canyon you know how immense it is. It is much bigger than you can anticipate from the pictures or movies you have seen. You have no idea until you arrive at the Grand Canyon just how magnificent it is. Then when you arrive you snap a picture and send it back to someone at home. Does that person really have a solid understanding of what the Grand Canyon experience is? Not really.

This is what grace is like. You can hear about grace, you can read about grace. You can understand conceptually what grace is. But when you feel grace in your heart that’s where the transformation begins.

The transformation is a thorough and dramatic change in the form of appearance, and change at a core level. A visceral type of change. An undeniable change. It’s the type of change which impacts every cell in the human spirit. It can be felt in the heart, soul, and mind.

A TRANSFORMED HEART AND MIND

I believe this transformation, which grace initiates, begins in the heart. It is a total heart issue. Once we feel change in our heart it compels every part of our being to change. We start thinking differently. When we start thinking differently we begin acting differently. Our behaviors change. It is a complete cycle of transformation which has an incredible impact on our lives and on the lives of those around us. This transformation is something we enjoy and something we get to share with others. Truly, life with Jesus is the better way to live.

Embrace the transformation of your heart and mind through God’s grace.

A Transformed Heart and Mind  
by Whitney Newton   www.ironmenbiblestudy.com

**SCHEDULE**

**SECOND SUNDAY in LENT**

**February 28, 2021**

**Parish Address**  
668 N. Main St.  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18705—1742

**Parish Office**  
(570) 822-4988

**FAX**  
(570) 823-5932

**E-Mail**  
ccnwvb@live.com

**Online**  
standrebessettewb.com

**Find us on FACEBOOK**

**SSCM Convent**  
421 Madison St.  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702  
(570) 822-7629

**The Parish of St. André Bessette**  
A Community of Hospitality, Healing and Holiness

**CONTACT**

**SECOND SUNDAY in LENT**

**February 28, 2021**

**Mandate, we give witness**

**In fulfilling this Gospel**

**community that welcomes**

**living.**

**Bessette is a Catholic**

**the Good News to the**

**local Funeral Directors**

**No Morning Mass**

**11 am Arrangements made through**

**weekly Funeral Directors**

**Baptisms**

**Arrange through Parish Office**

**Weddings**

**Call Parish Office**

**Elementary Faith Formation**

**Adult Faith Formation**

**Communities**

**Contact Sr. Madonna**  
(570) 823-4988

**TIME SENSITIVE INFORMATION ENCLOSED**

**St. Andre Bessette Parish**  
668 N. Main  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18705-1742

**SCHEDULE**

**WEEKEND MASSES**

Saturday 4:00 pm  
Sunday 8:00 am  
Sunday 11:00 am  
Sunday 6:00 pm

**The Rosary is prayed**

**beginning 20 minutes before each Mass on Sundays and Weekdays.**

**Daily Mass**

Tuesday—Friday 8 am

**Stations of the Cross**

Fridays at Noon

**First Friday**

No Morning Mass  
May: 100 pm Confessions  
6:30 pm Mass  
7:00 pm Sacred Heart Devotions

**Reconciliation (Confessions) SATURDAY 2:30—3:30 pm or by appointment**

**Anointing of the Sick**

Call Parish Office

**Funerals**

11 am Arrangements made through local Funeral Directors

**Baptisms**

Arrange through Parish Office

**Weddings**

Call Parish Office

**Elementary Faith Formation**

Sundays at 9:00 am  
September—June

**Adult Faith Formation**

Communities

Contact Sr. Madonna  
(570) 823-4988

**THE PARISH OF ST. ANDRE BESSERTE**

**A Community of Hospitality, Healing and Holiness**

**SECOND SUNDAY in LENT**

**February 28, 2021**

**CONTACT**

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**The Parish of St. Andre Bessette**  
A Catholic Christian Community where the Mercy of God is made evident in daily living. We strive to be a community that welcomes the stranger, reconciles the outcast and proclaims the Good News to the Poor.

In fulfilling this Gospel Mandate, we give witness to God’s unfailing Love for all humanity.
The Transfiguration—perhaps like the Ascension—is a mystery of faith that often receives too little of our attention and meditation. But in truth, it is a mystery at the very center of our faith. When St. John Paul II gave us the Luminous Mysteries, he considered the Transfiguration the mystery of light par excellence (see Rosarium Virginis, 21).

Why does this mystery strike at the heart of the Christian faith? Because it shows forth the full divine glorification of humanity. God’s plan has never been merely about redemption and forgiveness of sins; God desires not only to forgive, but to heal and transform our fallen nature—to make us radiate through and through with his divinity. What happens to Jesus is exactly the template for what the Holy Spirit wants to do in each of us. In this respect, the Transfiguration of Jesus is a foreshadowing of our own resurrection—the divine glorification not just of our souls, but of our bodies as well (see CCC 556).

And not coincidentally, the Transfiguration occurs right on the heels of Christ’s first Passion prediction—teaching us that the suffering of the Cross culminates in triumphant glory and victory (see Matthew 16:21 and 17:1-5).

What do Moses and Elijah have to do with divine glory? Often, the presence of Moses and Elijah with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration is explained in terms of their representing the Law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah), as the Old Testament bearing witness to Jesus. Surely, this is part of what is going on; but there seems to be more.

Intriguingly, both of these Old Testament characters—manifest encounters with God’s holy presence. In Exodus 33, Moses famously requests to see the very glory of God (see Exodus 33:18); and eventually God’s glory manifests itself to him, even revealing divine attributes: “And the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. The Lord passed before him, and proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy and faithfulness.’” Exodus 34:5-6

Here, the Lord appears to Elijah—not in wind, earthquake, or fire, but in a still small voice (1 Kings 19:11-12).

In both episodes with Moses and Elijah, we have the curious expression “the Lord passed by/ passed before” (see 1 Kings 19:11; Exodus 33:19, 22; 34:6). The Hebrew and the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) use the same expression in all these passages—abar in Hebrew, erchomai in Greek.

Interestingly, in Mark’s account of Jesus walking on the water, he notes that Jesus meant “to pass by” (Mark 6:48). On its face, this is a strange statement (after all, where’s he going?). Mark uses a form of erchomai, the very Greek word used to render the above theophanies where the Lord “passed by” Moses and Elijah.

Is Mark suggesting here by this curious expression that in and through Jesus, we have the manifest presence of the Lord, another divine theophany? Yes, indeed—for Mark, combines this narrative with Jesus’ use of “It is I” which in Greek is ego eimi and hearkens back to the divine name.
**What do we REALLY Believe About the Eucharist?**

Since our earliest days, we were taught that the Eucharist is the "Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ" present in both Body and Wine. But is this what we truly believe?

If so, why are we so quick to dismiss participation in the Eucharist in the midst of the Coronavirus Pandemic?

Perhaps, we need a little honesty here.

Our Catholic Tradition upholds that the Eucharist is Truly the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity—that is, the whole person of Jesus Christ present to us under the forms of Bread and Wine. This gift was presented to the Church on the night Jesus shared his Last Supper with his disciples.

"This is My Body," he said, "Which will be given up for you." "This is the Chalice of My Blood, which shall be poured out for the forgiveness of sins."

"Do this in memory of Me."

While other Christian denominations have downgraded the Eucharist to a "symbolic action only," Catholics have held to the position that the Eucharist is truly and actually present.

When asked why people do not return to participation in the Eucharist, one often hears the reply: "I am afraid of contracting the coronavirus or spreading it to my family."

Yet these same people go to work every day, go shopping, go out to eat, gather with friends, etc. Yet they are afraid to get the coronavirus in church.

Fear of the Eucharist is not the problem. The real problem is that we profess—and in what we say we believe. If we believe that the Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood of Christ given to us as food and drink, a necessity for our ongoing spiritual lives, why is it that we so glibly excuse ourselves from participating in the Eucharist? We do not truly believe what we profess.

And that is the crux of the problem. As long as we refuse to recognize that the Transfiguration was a unique event with Jesus (see Matthew 17:1), and Peter famously announces that he will make three tents—one for Moses, Elijah, and Jesus. Strange as this comment might seem at first glance, the Transfiguration is the Feast of Booths (or Feast of Tabernacles, see Leviticus 23:39-43). This was an annual feast that had multiple layers of meaning: first, it marked the completion of the summer harvest; second, the booths or tents Israelites built recalled Israel's life in the desert; third, the booths symbolized the first steps of the people in the Promised Land; fourth, the feast pointed to this heavenly reality, the Feast of Tabernacles.

By the time of Jesus, the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated in the Temple precincts with a special lighting ceremony, as well as a distinctive water ritual. It is, therefore, not an accident that in the very context of this feast—the Feast of Tabernacles—Jesus announces the fulfillment of the Temple and the flood of living water (John 7:37-39).

The Transformative Power of Christianity

Jesus’ risen and glorified body is the fulfillment of the Temple and its liturgical feasts. The risen Jesus is the New Temple (see John 2:19-21 and Matthew 12:6). And especially in and through the Eucharist, we enter this New and living Temple—here we enter the new creation and heaven itself.

Thus, it is quite fitting that the Eucharist should be the grand and obvious expression of the reception of the Eucharist to the transfiguration of our bodies:

"our participation in the Eucharist already gives us a foretaste of Christ’s transfiguration of our bodies." (CCC 1000, emphasis added)

So, why is the Transfiguration so crucial to the Christian faith?

Because the Christian faith does not end with the Cross. It does not end even with Christ’s resurrection. Mary goes before us in her Assumption, receiving the glorification of both her soul and body, as a participation in the work of her son.

But this, too, is not just for our Blessed Mother. What happened at the Transfiguration points to the entire Body of Christ. What we contemplate in the Transfiguration is a sign of God’s plan for each and every one of us, to redeem and glorify each of us in soul and body. Only the Eucharist, we participate in this heavenly reality, even now.

**Have we come to grips with the transfiguring power of the Eucharist?**

Or, have we settled for a reductionistic version?

May we embrace the fullness of what Our Lord has given us with joy and gratitude!

Not so today. Not so.
SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL UPDATE

The Social Justice Council is making plans to assist those in need this Easter.

If you or someone you know is having a difficult time, financially, and you could use some help for Easter, please call Anna Hudock at 570-822-1926 before March 7th!

Anyone needing help this Easter must contact us.

We are also planning on remembering our Homebound Parishioners and Nursing Home Residents at Easter.

If you, or a family member, has become Homebound, or entrusted to a Care Facility, please contact ANNA HUDOCK before March 7th!

We do not want to inadvertently miss anyone.

Because of the restrictions of the COVID PANDEMIC, the Social Justice Council WILL NOT be preparing Blessed Baskets for the Homebound this Easter.

The Social Justice Council will meet at 6 pm on Thursday, March 4th in Fr. Zolinski Hall. Final plans for Easter will be discussed. Social Distancing Protocols will be observed.

Liturgical Ministry Schedule

March 6-7, 2021
Third Sunday in Lent

Saturday, 4 pm Vigil
Dolores Rojas
Drugush Degnan
Linda Maia Jackie Barkus
Mark Choman
Don Bonetski

Sunday, 8 am
Linda Maia Jackie Barkus
Mark Choman
Don Bonetski

Sunday, 11 am
Dolores Rojas
Mark Choman
Don Bonetski

Sunday, 6 pm
Linda Maia Jackie Barkus
Mark Choman
Don Bonetski

We thank these ministers who have continued to serve during this time of pandemic. We ask all other ministers to consider a return to service so that our parish can function properly again.

If you are willing to return to service, Please Contact Mary at the Rectory Office ASAP!
Lenten Schedule of Services

**The Light is On For You/Sacrament of Reconciliation**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is an important part of the process of Conversion that the Lenten Season calls us to. It is important that we frequently examine our souls and remove the occasions of sin that sully our lives.

"The Light is on for You" is an initiative of the Diocese of Scranton in which churches are open for quiet prayer and Confession throughout Lent.

Beginning **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22nd**, Confessions will be available from 4:30—5:30 pm in our church.

In addition, Confessions are heard every Saturday from 2:30 until 3:25 pm.

We encourage our Parishioners to use this opportunity to be reconciled before Easter.

**In addition to Daily Mass, the Adoration of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is also a commendable practice that also, has sadly fallen by the wayside.**

We acknowledge the Presence of Jesus in the Tabernacle and offer him our Thanksgiving, Adoration, Petition and Supplication. We pray for our personal needs as well as the needs of our parish community and the world around us.

**Our parish church is open every Thursday afternoon from Noon until 4 pm for Adoration and private prayer.**

**THE HOLY ROSARY**

In many apparitions of our Lady and in many exhortations by Saints and Popes, the Rosary is held up as an excellent means of prayer and meditation on the Life of Christ.

Our parish Community prays the Rosary each day before the morning Mass and on Sundays before each of the Masses.

This is an opportunity for us to present ourselves as a community before God through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary to seek the spiritual aid necessary to keep our parish a vibrant and vital community of faith.

Plan to join us for the Rosary whenever you come to Mass.

**The Way of the Cross——a devotion to the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ——will be offered every Friday during Lent at noon in our parish Church.**

All Parishioners are encouraged to take part in this weekly devotion. If you are not able to participate in person, it will be broadcast on our parish Youtube page each Friday afternoon.

**And In Case You Forgot….**

FRIDAYS OF LENT are DAYS of ABSTINENCE when no meat is to be eaten.
Be of One Heart and Mind United With Christ
by Alexandra
www.tranformourhearts.com

One morning recently I awoke with the following verse in my head: “The community of believers was of one heart and one mind” (Acts 4:32). Why am I waking up with Bible verses in my head? Is evil? But when I read the daily readings, I was presented with this verse from St. Paul to the Philippians 2:2: “complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing.”

I was sensing a theme – unity in heart and mind among the followers of Christ.

As we are all well aware, our country is not exactly united in heart and mind right now. (Is that not the understatement of the century?) In fact, just days before these verses were presented to me, the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett for the Supreme Court was announced. The internet and media was lit up with anti-Catholic sentiment, not only from non-Catholics. Even other Catholics were opposing this well- educated, well-qualified, Catholic woman, simply because she holds firmly to Catholic beliefs and morals. I was disheartened. This just made obvious the terrible rift in our society and also within our faith.

Are there those who say they are not Catholic enough? Are there those who say others are too Catholic, if it were possible to hold too closely to the faith and living Christ? Are there some Catholics who hand-pick which doctrines they like and the others they’ll ignore. Then there are others who are critical of anyone who appears to not be devout enough. And if you support certain politicians, you are the enemy. You are despicable, and it’s okay to despise you.

Mind you, I understand how easy this is. I have fallen prey to many of these definitions myself and find myself seeking forgiveness for it regularly. I often lack mercy and gentleness, and I can easily harbor condemnation in my heart. So I preach to myself with these words.

We all fall short of the mark when it comes to living Christ-life lives. It’s just so easy to see now in our highly contentious social climate.

Clearly, we have forgotten a few things from Christ that are necessary for truly following him.
First, we have forgotten the Greatest Commandment:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”

And the second is: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these. Mark 12:30-31 (emphasis mine)

There is that idea again, of using all of one’s heart and mind! But more on this later. For now, let’s focus on the first part of the greatest commandment: love your neighbor as yourself.

Sadly, we have forgotten who our neighbor is!

But Jesus’ teaching is quite clear.

Everyone is our neighbor! Even our “enemy” – that Republican or Democrat, conservative or liberal, pro-choice voter, devout or lapsed Catholic – is our neighbor.

For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same…But rather, love your enemies and do good to them…Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Luke 6:32-36 (emphasis mine)

Gotta love it when Jesus calls us out on our behavior!

So, are we ill-tempered toward those with whom we disagree? Do we lash out at them or keep our words sewing discord? Do we behave obstinately when someone questions our decisions? Do we act in a way that denigrates the dignity of our neighbor? Do we act towards another person? Do we wish harm to our “enemies”?

None of the above behaviors are loving and charitable. None of them is Christ-like. We are we to avoid those behaviors but we are told to do the opposite – to do good to our enemies and be merciful.

But, our pride hardens us, us and deafens us. Not only can’t we be merciful, but we cannot see the ways in which we might be wrong or in need of repentance. Pride leads us to discount, malice, despair, detraction, hypocrisy, obstinacy, hardness of heart, wrath, and hatred. When we find ourselves experiencing some of these negative emotions, we need to recognize them as a red flag! We must recognize these emotions and emotions for what they are: pride taken hold of us. Pride can be a warning sign that we are drifting away from Christ. The emotion is not necessarily sinful, but the action that arises can be.

And now here comes the Gospel lesson that we tend to ignore. We focus our attention on the glory of our neighbor, while ignoring the giant beam of wood in our own eye.

Oh, how easy it is to criticize one’s neighbor for a great many things! Are we really so self-righteous to believe we are free from sin and imperfection, so that we can cast that stone? Or, are we purposely seeking out affirmation of our tightly held opinions and beliefs from those we want? We exalt ourselves, while our pride blinding us to the ways in which we are short from following Christ? Is it possible that we have misunderstood Church teaching and now our arguments are sewing discord?

It’s so easy to believe that we have the more virtuous answer and virtuous reasons for arguing, criticizing and condemning. And maybe it is true. However, we should not distrust one another (they are usually tainted with pride and misunderstanding).

Because we focus our energy on arguing, condemning and acting self-righteously, we are both losing our souls to sin and we are also doing harm to others. Rather than convincing others of God’s great love for them, we often come off as self-righteous and thoughts captive to God. We need to do nothing about God’s love. We need to turn to Him in these moments, and stop thinking about God’s love and pride doesn’t want to look inward, but instead, pushes us to turn to our neighbor. To prevent acting in a way that is opposite of goodness and mercy, we should always turn first to God in prayer. We should be of one heart and one mind, united in Christ.

Not only should we do good to our neighbor through our actions, but we are also responsible for our neighbors!

Think hard about those whose faith is fragile, or those who are lapsed or nominal Catholics, even those who have just begun to experience a conversion.

When we go out into the world as a profession to publically represent Christ. That carries with it a grave responsibility to act in accord with the Gospel. If we choose to support something that goes directly against the Ten Commandments, we are not following Christ.

If we publicly support, proclaim or represent anything other than Gospel truths, we risk damaging the faith of others.

PSALM OF THE SEED
Awaken, you buried seeds asleep in your earthen tombs! Rise up with joy to break forth the hard corks of your shells! Your Eastertime has come the song of the dove is heard over the softening land. Winter has hidden, and morning now dances on your graves to waken the dead.

Awaken, seed of holiness buried deep within me. Rise up to fulfill your destiny whose time has come. For sanctity is scribbled bold within my blood and brain. Onward and beyond have I been called even before the sun or knew the earth around me.

May spring enchant the saint, shy and hesitant within me, and set the rhythm for my sluggish feet in a dance of holy yearning.

Edward Hays
Prayers of a Planetary Pilgrim