

2 Lent C 2019 SML
LK 9:28-36

Pope Benedict XVI, in his book Jesus of Nazareth, notes that all three Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, link Peter's Confession at Caesarea Philippi, where Jesus asked His disciples the twofold question, "Who do 'the people' say that I am?" and "Who do 'you' say that I am?" with the Transfiguration, where Our Divine Lord took Peter, James and John up the mountain with Him to pray. And right there, in these two stories, there are three classes of people:

1. those who thought they knew Him,
2. those who knew Him,
3. and those who really knew Him.

First: those who think they know Him . . . the people in general, the masses, the media, "The View" . . . "Who do people say that I am?"

I was at the gym on Ash Wednesday and I ran into a parishioner and we were talking about it being Ash Wednesday. And another member, whose wife is a parishioner and comes to Mass, but when I ask him to come to Mass, says something quip like, "Oh, Father, you can pray for me," chimes in, without invitation, and says, "Well I guess 40 days of no meat is

supposed to make up for Jesus dying on the Cross.” To which I felt like saying, “Who asked you?” But I didn’t. What I said was, “Tom:

- ✓ First of all, don’t make fun of my religion;
- ✓ Second, nobody said 40 days without meat would make up for Jesus dying on the Cross
- ✓ Third, Lent does not require 40 days without meat
- ✓ And fourth, Ashes today, followed by 40 days of sacrifice, which Lent does require, is not the “be all and end all” of my religion; it’s part of a lifestyle.

A Catholic lifestyle that:

- ✓ Includes daily prayers, when I get up, go to bed, before I eat, before and after every class I teach, before anything that may be difficult during the day, a few minutes each day reading a daily app devotional on my phone . . . name the times during the day, every day, that you pray;
- ✓ A Catholic lifestyle that for us, includes worship of God every Sunday, when I literally receive God in my heart and God in my hand in Holy Communion;
- ✓ A Catholic lifestyle that gives of my time and hard - earned money to spread the good news through my Church, to help the poor and to feed the hungry, not just at Thanksgiving, but year round;
- ✓ A Catholic lifestyle that buys Christmas presents, not just for my family, but presents for those who can’t afford them
- ✓ A Catholic lifestyle who rallies in Trenton and marches in

Washington, because I'm pro-life and every human life, born and unborn is sacred;

- ✓ A Catholic lifestyle that is there for my family and my friends and even those I don't know, when they need me
- ✓ A Catholic lifestyle, a Catholic lifestyle, a Catholic lifestyle

There are those the likes of Tom who think they know Him. The chip on their shoulders tells us they think they know Him, but they do not.

Next, Our Divine Lord poses the same question to those who did know Him, His Disciples. And Peter, in Luke's Gospel, speaks up and declares, who He "knew" Our Divine Lord to be, "the Christ of God."

Third, from those who knew Him, Our Divine Lord singled out Peter, James and John and took them up the mountain, because Our Divine Lord wanted these three to "really" know Him.

Why the mountain? Because the mountain is the place of ascent, and not only outward ascent, but inward ascent, liberation from the burden of everyday life. So if in your own life, you want to move from being someone who:

1. thinks they know Him,
2. to someone who does know Him,

3. to someone who really knows Him, figuratively ascend the mountain, prioritize what's really important, and leave behind what's not. And anyone who has just buried a loved one can tell you what is really important, because nothing helps to prioritize what is important more than a death in the family.

The mountain serves, as it did on the nights spent by Our Divine Lord in prayer, as the place of particular closeness to God. Think of the various mountains of Jesus' life:

- ✓ the mountain of temptation;
- ✓ the mountain of His preaching the Sermon on the Mount;
- ✓ the mountain of his prayer;
- ✓ the mountain of his Transfiguration;
- ✓ the mountain of his agony;
- ✓ the mountain of the Cross;
- ✓ and finally the mountain of the Ascended Lord.

So, in order to really know Our Divine Lord, we need to "figuratively speaking," ascend God's mountain and prioritize what's important.

We ascended Mount Tabor when we visited the Holy Land. And the view is breathtaking. What we saw is what Jesus, Peter, James and John saw. It wasn't hard to figure out why Our

Blessed Lord chose Tabor as the mountain of Transfiguration.

What is unique to Luke's account of the Transfiguration is the reason why Our Divine Lord, and Peter, James and John ascended the mountain in the first place. "Jesus took with Him Peter, James and John, and went up the mountain **to pray**. And as He **was praying**, His face changed in appearance and His clothing became dazzling white . . ." 28-29.

The Transfiguration was a prayer event that displayed visibly what happens when Jesus talked with His Father, the profound interpenetration of his being with God, of becoming, as we profess in the Nicene Creed, "Light from Light." First, we prioritize what's important, and leave what's not. And second, we pray.

From here, I'd like to turn my attention from Peter to John. Because it was John who really knew Who Jesus was. Peter was always quick to speak:

- ✓ "You are the Christ of God," (LK 9:20)
- ✓ "Let's build some booths."
- ✓ "Even if I must die with you, I will never deny you." (JN 13:37)

Peter was just as quick to act: Peter obviously did not buy the beatitude "Blessed are the peacemakers" because he slept with

his sword. He was sword ready. “And Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.” (JN 18:10)

- ✓ But who was always steady in the storm? John!
- ✓ Who at the Last Supper, was privileged to lie his head on the chest of the Divine Lord, and hear the beating of His Sacred Heart? John!
- ✓ Who was the only disciple who stood at the foot of the Cross? John.
- ✓ To whom did Our Crucified Lord give the care of His Blessed Mother? John.
- ✓ Who really knew Him? John.

Obviously, it was John who, at the Wedding Feast at Cana, took the advice of Our Blessed Mother to heart when she said, “Do whatever He tells you.” And it was John who took to heart the command of the Father from the cloud of the Transfiguration, who said, “Listen to Him.”

You want to move from “Tom at the gym,” to one whose lifestyle is Catholic and can relatively say they “know Jesus,” to John, who can honestly say he “really knows Jesus,” then prioritize what’s important; pray; you will notice in the Adoration Chapel, where will spend time in prayer 24/7 with Our Blessed Lord, what’s painted on the wall - the command given by God in

today's Gospel to which we will take to heart in Adoration when we, "Listen to Him."