

Early Edition

What would you do if you knew the future? How might that alter the way you act today? In the 1990's there was a television show named *Early Edition* built on this premise. Gary Hobson receives an advance copy of the *Chicago Sun Times* newspaper at 6:30 each morning. Knowing the future, he tries to change it. He is a Good Samaritan at heart and crisscrosses the city trying to prevent accidents and save lives. Through his self-sacrifice, he helps many people and sews seeds of goodness. In all circumstances, he helps his neighbor to the best of his ability.

The Transfiguration is the *Early Edition* of the Resurrection of Jesus. Peter, James and John witness the glorified Body of Christ in the presence of Moses and the Prophet Elijah. However, unlike the TV series, they do not act on this information. For starters, Jesus swears them to secrecy. "Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead" (Mt 17:9). Secondly, they don't yet understand. In the week prior to the Transfiguration, Jesus made his first prediction of his Passion:

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised.

Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, "God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you." He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do" (Mt 16:21-23).

Revealing his future glory at the Transfiguration is one way Jesus tried to help the Apostles to think as God does. Their immediate reaction is one of fear. So, they don't get it at first. In time they will.

In our second reading, Pope Peter retells the story: " 'This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased.' We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain" (2 Pt 1:17-18). Peter uses his eyewitness account to encourage the faithful to listen to him since he possesses the prophetic message. Living the Christian life was difficult in a hostile, secular environment. One may argue the same point Peter argued two thousand years ago, holds true in modern times. Those who hold secular values often minimize Christian values and subject Christians to ridicule and scorn.

What would you do if you knew the future? How might that alter the way you act today? None of us can foretell the future, but the Transfiguration does shine light on our future destiny. Just as Moses and Elijah conversed with Jesus in a vision of the Kingdom to come, we may one day stand alongside Jesus on a holy mountain talking with him. Jesus suffered his passion and death that we might come to "share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity" (Roman Missal, pg. 529).

A glimpse of the future should inform our present actions. Like the fictional Gary Hobson of the *Early Edition*, we should all try to be Good Samaritans. When we see people hurting, we should respond in compassion. Saint Barnabas (Ofc of Readings Aug 5) said it this way:

- Share with your neighbor whatever you have... If you both share an imperishable treasure, how much more must you share what is perishable.
- Preserve the traditions you have received, adding nothing and taking nothing away. The evildoer will ever be hateful to you.
- Be fair in your judgments. Never stir dissension, but act as a peacemaker and reconcile the quarrelsome.

The path to our future with the Risen Lord involves carrying our cross today with a sense of urgency. Our acts of kindness can help build the Kingdom of heaven here on earth. Daily self-sacrifice is the proper response to our glimpse into the future.