

**Holy Mass of the Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor
January 2019**

Those who've been there and lived through the experience of **SUMMITTING EVEREST** refer to the last camp, Camp 4, as '**THE DEATH ZONE.**' It's located on a moonscape like plateau **on the edge of Earth's atmosphere.** They say THE SKY TAKES ON A STRANGE DARK BLUE HUE – a reminder that you're as *close as you can get to space on earth...*

One Climber captures the experience of making it to **Camp 4** in this way:

“ONLY FEAR remains on everyone's face... People don't talk a lot. You rest in your tent, you feel weak, and you try to get some sleep before The Final Part of the Adventure – the **SUMMIT PUSH.** You are in **THE DEATH ZONE** and you can't help thinking that within the next 48 hours, there is a very real risk that you might not live...

You go over your gear in the daylight and you have everything neatly organized. You drink 3 L of fluid and you will bring another 2 L of hot fluid for the climb. The wind rustles the tent canvas and **you probably won't sleep a wink.** TAKE IT EASY... For **as soon as you start the climb, you'll feel much better.** **FEAR IS ALWAYS** worse than the reality...”

It happened while he was descending after having SUMMITED... **Jon Krakauer** wanted to wait for others who were still in the process of SUMMITTING and so he decided to stop and rest for a few moments. He asked a friend to turn down his oxygen supply JUST A BIT so that he could save as much as he could for the way down.

There he was, standing there and taking it all in when all of a sudden he felt a **SENSE OF UNBELIEVABLE CONTROL!** Standing there on top of Everest, he recalls experiencing this moment of **ABSOLUTE CLARITY** as he gazed out over the peaks of the **Himalayan Mountains** and then... as quickly as it happened – **it was over...** **HIS OXYGEN TANK WAS SUDDENLY COMPLETELY EMPTY.**

Turns out his friend had turned the knob in the wrong direction and instead of turning it down, he turned it **ON FULL BLAST!!**

The **MOMENT OF ABSOLUTE CLARITY and CONTROL** was a **direct result of an oversupply of oxygen** to the brain – it had all been an **ILLUSION...**

Most people live their lives on earth in exactly **THE REVERSE** of the experience that I've just described. **WE LIVE IN A STATE OF OVERSUPPLIED OXYGEN** – for we love to think that **we're in complete control HERE** and that we're experiencing every moment of life in **PICTURE PERFECT Clarity and Knowledge.** **But THAT'S just AN ILLUSION...**

It's an **ILLUSION** that WE ALL FALL PREY TO and today, **Peter James and John** stand before us as a reminder of what life feels like when all of a sudden circumstances outside of our control envelops us within a DARK CLOUDLIKE EXPERIENCE that is **Unfamiliar, Foreign, and Downright Disturbing.**

For that **SINGULAR MOMENT** of what must've been **Terror and Panic** for **Krakauer** as he realized the plight of his situation is most **DEFINITELY** comparable to what Peter, James and John must've felt **as THIS MOUNTAIN on which they stood suddenly became enveloped by a THICK CLOUD / as Christ was TRANSFIGURED before them** – and if that wasn't enough – suddenly Moses and Elijah appear from out of nowhere!!!

The FIRST THING WE NEED TO DO is Understand that the Transfiguration is a SUM EVENT in Jesus' life.

'What do I mean by that?'

Let's BACK UP THE BUS HERE and call to mind what Jesus and his disciples just lived through prior to this: **HIS TRANSFIGURATION ON THIS VERY MOUNTAIN TOP**... for it was but just a few days ago when our blessed Lord asked his disciples the following question in Caesarea Philippi: "***And you, who do you say that I am?***"

Peter gives his most Famous Answer: "**You are the Christ, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.**" In Matthew's Gospel, the response of Jesus is particularly strong: "**Blessed are you Simon Bar-jonah for flesh and blood has not revealed this Truth to you** (it's not human ingenuity, IT'S NOT YOU that figured that one out) **but you have just received that as A REVELATION from my Father!**"

Peter's FINEST HOUR is followed up pretty much IMMEDIATELY by one of his worst when Jesus says: "**Okay, let me teach you what it means that I am the Messiah: "the Son of Man must go up to Jerusalem, be rejected by the scribes and the elders, be PUT TO DEATH and on the third day rise again..."**"

And Peter says: "**NO! Don't be a Messiah that way!!**"

And Jesus says: "**GET BEHIND ME SATAN!!!**" 2x (a reminder for all us that even the greatest God moments we will ever live through *run the risk of being hijacked by Satan* if we but let down our guard...)

He then says:

"Anyone who wishes to follow me – let them DENY THEMSELVES – pick up their cross each day and walk in my footsteps. If you can't do this, then you cannot be my Disciple." Matthew 16:24

Why does the Evangelist tell us that story at that time? ***Why are they telling ANY STORY??***

To help us Understand **THIS CENTER** – for here we see **JESUS' OWN UNDERSTANDING** of this as '**His CENTER.**' That's what the Evangelists are reporting in the Transfiguration because after this very hard encounter, this strange message about what kind of Messiah he is, along with the STRANGE and AWFUL REQUIREMENTS that are necessary on the part of any 'would be follower of Jesus' – **to follow in his footsteps, bearing a cross**, after all that, **six days later**: Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up THIS High Mountain and here: He is **TRANSFIGURED BEFORE THEM...**

His face begins to shine LIKE THE SUN, his CLOTHES BECOME DAZZLING WHITE – the Greek verb that's used in the original text suggests that they "**FLASHED LIKE LIGHTNING**".

Clearly, on that day: the prophecy of Daniel, who saw the Son of Man nearly 600 years before his coming to earth, He now stands RIGHT HERE before Peter James and John with ***HIS HEAD and his hair white as wool, white as snow; his EYES flash like flames of fire, HIS FEET are like burnished bronze – refined as in a furnace, and HIS VOICE is like the sound of many waters; WHILE HIS FACE shines like the sun in full strength!!!***

They fall on their faces **IN AWE** – a cloud covers them and then a Voice **BOOMS OUT** from the clouds – ***it's GOD!!!***

I mean here we are **INSIDE** the experience - A VOICE: "***THIS IS MY BELOVED SON!!!!***"

LISTEN TO HIM!!"

And not just vaguely ‘*listen to Him,*’ – but “***LISTEN TO HIM FOR WHAT HE JUST TOLD YOU six days ago!!!***” for **this VERY MOMENT** has entered the stage of Human History following the precise moment **when Jesus speaks of the Cross that awaits him atop Mount Golgotha**: for that's when the Glory that is within Him will NO LONGER BE CONTAINED within him!!

PARALLEL before your **Inner Mind's Eye** THE EVENTS that will soon unfold during the **Crucifixion of our Lord on Mount Golgotha...**

AT THE TRANSFIGURATION

We have three disciples: Peter, James, and John

AT THE CRUCIFIXION

We also find three disciples: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the Mother of the sons of Zebedee.

AT THE TRANSFIGURATION

Jesus takes others...
Jesus is ELEVATED on the Mountain...
Mount Tabor – Private Epiphany...
Jesus' Garments are Illumined....
Jesus is **Glorified**...
2 Saints stand beside Jesus...
The Father PROFESSES His Son...

AT THE CRUCIFIXION

Jesus is taken by others...
Jesus is ELEVATED on the Cross...
Mount Golgotha – Public Spectacle...
His Garments are STRIPPED OFF...
Jesus is *shamed*...
2 Criminals crucified beside Him...
The Father ABANDONS His Son...

The putting together of all this is **something that ONLY GOD HIMSELF can do by the power of the Holy Spirit in the figure of Jesus of Nazareth**. The PUTTING TOGETHER OF ***THE GLORY OF HIS TRANSFIGURATION*** and ***HIS CRUCIFIXION ON THE CROSS*** is a TERRIBLE paradox of our Christian Faith – and it's one that never goes away...

The GLORY and the CROSS – **a paradox that never goes away...** And Jesus is standing ***RIGHT INSIDE*** this paradox. Here He is, RIGHT HERE: pointing to his death and resurrection and THE FATHERS VOICE CONFIRMS HIM...

...and now – now watch, **WATCH this: the entire Old Testament comes in!!**

Suddenly Moses and Elijah are SEEN HERE...

The meaning of Moses and Elijah are like the Scriptural Shorthand that's meant to sum up the whole Bible: **MOSES = the Law**, and **Elijah = The Prophets**.

So the whole Old Testament is right here TALKING TO JESUS, and as Luke says in his account, **Moses and Elijah** are there **speaking with Jesus about ‘the Exodus’ which he is to undergo in Jerusalem**.

THERE'S NO DOUBT behind what all this means!!!

THE event of Our Lord's TRANSFIGURATION is a **GREAT KEY** that allows for us to unlock whole new level of Understanding when it comes to **discovering the CENTER OF OUR FAITH** and how to hold on to that Center.

The **CENTER OF OUR FAITH** has to do with **living out our lives knowing** that ***THE ULTIMATE TRANSFIGURATION*** reserved for human beings has nothing to do with greatness on earth – the **ULTIMATE TRANSFIGURATION** is that which awaits us **AT THE END OF TIME** when our **Immortal Soul will be reunited to our Immortal Body on the Day Of Our Resurrection From The Dead.**

The **BUSINESS OF LIFE** is all about ***PEELING BACK THE ILLUSIONS*** and living in the clarity of ‘**GOD MOMENTS**’ as we make our way through the Valley of Death...

So often times we feel like we’re living in Camp 4... ***BARELY CATCHING A WINK OF SLEEP AT NIGHT*** and wondering **how in the world we’re going to make it through the day** cause ***FEAR’S COURSING THROUGH OUR VEINS*** at 180 miles an hour!

Following this, **OUR TRANSFIGURATION MOMENT**, keep alive in your heart the last words spoken by **THE GLORIFIED SON OF MAN** to Peter James and John this day because those words are **OUR WORDS...**

"Jesus came and touched them saying: ‘*GET UP* and Do Not Be Afraid!"

In the words of an **EVEREST SUMMITEER**:

“TAKE IT EASY... For as soon as you START THE CLIMB, you’ll feel much better.

For FEAR IS ALWAYS worse than **THE REALITY...”**