

From the Summit

Homily for October 22, 2020

In August I hiked to the summit of Fairview Lookout. This viewpoint is 1000 metres above Lake Louise and the views from the lookout gave me a perspective of Mount Temple and the surrounding peaks, and of Lake Louise, I have never seen before. Prior to August I had visited Lake Louise many times but had never appreciated it like on the first Wednesday in August of 2020 when I had a summit perspective at 1000 metres.

For his whole life the Apostle Paul had a relationship with God, both as a Jewish Pharisee and subsequently as the Apostle to the Gentiles. From the summit described in Ephesians chapter 3 he has a perspective on our human destiny the early Church Fathers termed: "divinization".

What does the word "divinization" mean?

In the Mass, when the priest or deacon mixes the water with the wine, he quietly says these words:

"By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity."

The Catechism speaks of divinization this way: "For the Son of God became man so that we might become God. For the only begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers of his divinity, assumed our nature, that he made man, might make men gods."

This is the view of our dignity St. Paul expresses in Ephesians 3. Three times he uses the word "glory". Once in reference to the Ephesian Christians, once in reference to the total resources of God and thirdly in reference to how we are to live in the present so as to one day obtain the glory of our divinization.

Paul encourages that the Ephesians not lose heart because of his suffering, for he says "they are your glory". What does he mean by this? Paul is suffering at this time because of the opposition he faced from the Jewish leadership because he was proclaiming the Gentiles are fellow heirs to the promises of God. Paul however is pleased to suffer in this way because the Ephesian Christians are discovering their true identity and destiny in Christ, which is our glory, which allows us to begin even now to share in the fullness of heavenly glory.

Paul speaks of the riches of God's glory - that is the fullness of the life that exists between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the angels and all the saints of heaven. It is his prayer that this glory will strengthen the Ephesians in their inner man, that is at the core of who they are, so that as they and we live in the present, we will in the Church give glory to God, just as Jesus did, the God made man. This is the third reference to glory,

So in these verses Paul sees from the summit the Ephesians glory that is a participation in God's glory that that we may give glory to God in the Church.

Today the Church remembers St John Paul II perhaps the 20th century person who more clearly understood this Christian anthropology. The whole of his life embodied the teaching that our identity and destiny in Christ pronounce human divinization. He tirelessly lived this as he experienced the

horrors of National Socialism's diminishing of human dignity during the years when Poland was under Nazi rule. As a man in his 20s Karol Wojtyla already saw from the same summit as St. Paul the inherent dignity of what it means to be a human person when Hitler's inhumane ideology robbed people of such dignity. Then under the years of communist rule, as a bishop and archbishop today's saint even more fully articulated the glory of the human person, made in the image of God. Such teaching then fully flowered during the 26 years of his papacy. He knew first-hand what Jesus says in today's Gospel. There will always be those, even within one's own family, among one's own people who will resist and even reject the biblical vision that we are to share in the divinity of Christ.

For this vision Paul and St. John Paul II both suffered. But it was a suffering they deemed well worth it because from that summit they had the perspective of human identity and destiny that when seen and give us an understanding of why we are here and where we are going that allows us to affirm God's great work of bringing us to share in his glory.