

18th Sunday in OT Cycle A, *Transfiguration of the Lord* – “**TRANSFIGURED FEAR**”

Daniel 7:9-10, 2 Peter 1:16-19, Matthew 17:1-9

In 1997, that's 20 years ago, **Jon Krakauer** published a book entitled: “**INTO THIN AIR**” – it's a personal account that describes the disastrous expedition that took place on Mount Everest back in May of '96. An expedition that claimed the lives of 8 climbers and served to **FOREVER ETCH MEMORIES of CLARITY** within the minds of those now referred to as: “*Everest Summiteers...*”

Those who've been there and lived through the experience refer to the place where you rest up before attempting to Summit as Camp 4: ‘**THE DEATH ZONE.**’ The camp is located on a plateau that looks like a moonscape where **you find yourself standing on the edge of the Earth's atmosphere.** They say that even THE SKY TAKES ON A STRANGE DARK BLUE HUE – a reminder that you're as close as you can get to space on earth...

I love the way one Climber captures the experience of making it to Camp 4:

“**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 that **Jon Krakauer** went through the following experience: He 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...**

I'd say that for the most part people live their lives 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 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 the 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!!!*

I mean listen to Peter's reaction here: “**Lord it's good for us to be here, I will make three dwellings – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah!**” What he says MAKES NO SENSE... What he says is exactly what someone, anyone says whenever the **ILLUSION THAT EVERYTHING'S OKAY AND WE'RE IN CONTROL** suddenly shatters before our very eyes as our minds seek to grasp the meaning of what we're experiencing! And just when Peter James and John thought it was over – A VOICE – I mean just imagine that:

there you are on top of a Mountain and a VOICE Thunders out from the thick clouds all around you and the POWER of what's spoken resonates the following words all the way through THE VERY CORE OF YOUR BEING: "**This is my Son, THE BELOVED – and with HIM I am well pleased... LISTEN to Him!!!**"

God sent his Son to earth to SHATTER THE ILLUSION of the power we like to think we have **over everything and over every situation**. Today's Transfiguration is a reminder for humanity that we are called to live in a state of TREMBLING HUMILITY before the **Knowledge of the Almighty** and all that He has done and continues to do out of love for us.

I'll forever remember being on Pilgrimage back in 2013 in Jerusalem and having the opportunity to celebrate The Holy Mass on top of Mount Tabor, **the VERY SUMMIT where the Transfiguration of our Lord took place**. As I made my way into the sanctuary with Fr. Nathan, my mind was preoccupied with trying to grasp the meaning behind the significance of being there – when we got to the altar, we do what priests always do – we leaned down to kiss the top of it – and as I did so – **this incredible SHOCK of Power** (there's no other way to describe it) a **SHOCK OF POWER resonated through the very core of my being...**

I've never had that happen to me again – '**Do YOU think that I THINK God allowed for this to happen in order to get my attention? To get me to LISTEN MORE ATTENTIVELY to His Beloved Son?**'

It's NO SECRET TO ANYONE, they say that if and when you Summit Mount Everest – as you begin to make your way down from the place known as THE BALCONY – you'll pass by a number of corpses – DECEASED CLIMBERS... **I mean just this past May; four people were found dead in one tent at Camp 4 – 'THE DEATH ZONE.'** How's that for a reality check!

Mount Everest has even been coined: "**THE WORLD'S HIGHEST OPEN GRAVE...**"

CASE IN POINT: to reach the HIGHEST SUMMIT ON EARTH, it will cost you something very similar to that which it costs everyone who desires to Summit the Highest Level of that which is reserved for human beings: which is **THE RESURRECTION**...

Cause you see, while the **Transfiguration of our Lord** sure seemed like **THE PEAK EXPERIENCE of a Lifetime** for Peter James and John – but the TRUTH OF THE MATTER is that God the Father structured this event in such a way that it lead them – and inevitably LEADS ALL PEOPLE WHO THROUGH FAITH – will ever **SUMMIT the Experience of GAZING UPON his Son's Transfigured Glory on Mount Tabor** – this EVENT leads us all off THE BALCONY of Glory and immerses us into the daily experience of having to pass through the Valley of Death – until we reach another MOUNTAIN TOP EXPERIENCE – until we SUMMIT MOUNT GOLGOTHA and allow for the **Crucified Corpse of THE BELOVED to resonate throughout the core of our very being...**

Watch THIS LINK I'm about to formulate for you whereby the events that unfolded during this, the **Transfiguration of our Lord on Mount Tabor**, PARALLEL THE EVENTS that will soon unfold during the **Crucifixion of our Lord on Mount Golgotha...**

AT THE TRANSGURATION

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 EXPERIENCED ON MOUNT TABOR** and **THE CROSS EXPERIENCED ON MOUNT GOLGOTHA...**

It's 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 Christ our Saviour** is found standing ***RIGHT INSIDE*** this paradox...

WHY??? – to make it clear before all that the Ultimate Transfiguration reserved for human beings has nothing to do with what happens here on earth – the ULTIMATE TRANSFIGURATION is that a which awaits us at the end of time when our **Immortal Souls will be reunited to an immortal body on the day of our resurrection from the dead.**

For now, every day life on earth 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 ***FEARS COURSING THROUGH OUR VEINS*** at 180 miles an hour!

Note the last words of our Savior spoken to Peter James and John this day because those words are meant for us as well: "**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. ***FEAR IS ALWAYS*** worse than the reality...”