

The Transfiguration

The story of the Transfiguration in Matthew's Gospel presents Jesus enveloped in a radiant light. Moses and the prophet Elijah appear at his sides and the voice of God coming from within the bright cloud commands all to "listen to him." The apostles with Jesus were naturally terrified by the miracle they were witnessing – a scene that would likely have brought anyone to their knees. Although this scene is striking in many different ways and levels, God's voice and Jesus' message after the event is over offer two important messages, messages we find elsewhere in the Gospels.

The first message comes from the Father's voice and is addressed to the disciples and to us: "Listen to him!" This command finds echo in the Blessed Mother's urging to the servants at the wedding of Cana. "Do whatever he tells you," she said, and a first miracle occurred. Jesus turned water into wine and in doing so, he prefigured the Eucharist and blessed all marriages, inviting us all to enjoy the feast of life and of His love. It is interesting to me that the Father's command during the Transfiguration is so similar to the message Jesus' Mother gave to the servants, namely, to listen to Jesus and to do what he tells us to do.

The second message comes from the first words uttered to the disciples by Jesus following the Transfiguration event. "Do not be afraid" is a phrase Jesus often repeats throughout the Gospels--and is an echo that resounds throughout the Bible. This phrase reminds us, time and again, that we are to love and serve with courage, trusting in the Lord. How many times in our lives are we afraid? Our list of fears could be long: failure, public speaking, flying, people's opinions, profound losses, disease, and death itself—to mention just a few. Yet it is clear that Jesus wants us to live our lives without worry, concern, fear or anxiety; he asks us to live our lives to their fullest, with certainty, confidence, and joy. Yes, Christ offers us His peace, and his gentle command that we "be not afraid" resonates at our cores.

This Lent, as I reflect on my role as President, I realize I am to do the same. I am to trust in Jesus, do what he has told me to do, and follow His gentle command, as well as those of God the Father and our Blessed Mother. I am reminded whenever I do that, things tend to go well. I also realize that we, members of the University of the Incarnate Word, should live our personal and professional lives knowing that God loves us and trusting He will see us through. So, my invitation to all of us this Lent is "listen to him" and "do not be afraid." If we do this, things will go according to God's magnificent plan for each of us, and we will be able to work and live in peace.

Praised be the Incarnate Word!

Dr. Thomas M. Evans, President