



Wednesday Prayer

Transfiguration Sunday – Beloved Relationships

While [Peter] was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid."
Matthew 17:5-7

This excerpt is the dramatic high point of the Transfiguration story. The story is infused with mystery and wonder at this mountain-top encounter, evoking images of Moses and Elijah, but with an important difference. "This is my Son," the voice says. The same words spoken at Jesus' baptism. The parent/child relationship dynamic is central to our understanding of the story and of who Jesus is.

Commentator Edward Pillar describes how this familial relationship translates into the community we build together:¹

"The message of the transfiguration reminds us that the kingdom of King Jesus has family relationship at its heart. The King relates to the citizens of the kingdom as Lord, but also as brother; the citizens relate to one another as sisters and brother... with the spirit of family kindness, love, and welcome."

The relationship of parent and child is the closest possible human relationship. A relationship that involves the deepest dependence for newborns and requires unconditional love as children grow to maturity. Communities are shaken when that relationship is betrayed, and any kind of abuse or exploitation of a child occurs. The emotional damage from a child's loss of trust of a parent is difficult to undo.

The disciples react in awe and fear when they hear the voice from the cloud. But Jesus reassures them with a gentle touch and words of reassurance. He relates to their human anxiety as their brother and calms their fear. As we live out our human relationships, how can the life and words of Jesus, son of God and of Mary, inspire us to support and care for each other?

Jesus, shine your light on our family relationships. Keep us mindful of the responsibility to raise children in loving families, built on trust and free from fear. Surround our children with positive role models for creating healthy relationships, grounded in love and respect. Amen.

¹ https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=4373

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