

THROUGH CHRIST'S TRANSFIGURATION, WE SEE CHRIST'S FULL SUPPORT FOR OUR GROWTH DURING THE TIME OF LENT AND BEYOND

Second Sunday of Lent – 5 March 2023

Do you consider that you grow every day? Of course, we grow every time. All living beings grow little by little, even if we cannot see all processes of their growth visually.

Growth implies a sense of developing physically or spiritually. When we see kids growing, we are amazed at the significant developments in their fitness, minds and knowledge. What we may see in any growth is 'change.' No growth is made without change. We all have experienced a complete change that affects our minds or emotion. Marriage is an example of this change for most of you, and the diaconal ordination for me, and the priestly ordination for Fr Gerry.

We have found ourselves transformed remarkably since our marriage/ordination/graduation etc. Another dimension of growth is 'accompaniment or association'. Growth is associated with numerous factors with which people are surrounded. For instance, the economic growth of Australia is linked to the government's political and economic vision, national resources and trade with other overseas countries. So, growth is followed by change and accompaniment.

The *Word of God* has just been proclaimed with the story of Jesus' transfiguration, which is a story of growth, change, and accompaniment. Jesus went up the mountain with the three disciples, and he was suddenly transfigured, accompanied by Moses and Elijah. It was Moses and Elijah who had experienced a momentous growth with drastic changes in their emotions and minds. Moses was invited to Mount Sinai, on the top of which he met God face to face with receiving the ten commandments. Elijah became exhausted and moved onto Horeb, the mountain of God, where he cried out to God:

"It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors"

(1 King 19: 4 New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition).

Afterwards, God transformed and commissioned him for God's mission. Both Moses and Elijah experienced their own significant growth on the mountain.

While Jesus was being transfigured, there were opposing elements. The first one is the element of overpoweringness, and the other is that of nothingness. Before Peter, James, and John walked with their master on the mountain, they had been told that their master was going to die. Peter immediately denied that, but Jesus rebuked him. The three disciples would have felt lost or nothing as considering that their master was not great. On the other hand, a sense of overpoweringness that was real and spectacular was seen around Jesus. Moses and Elijah surrounded this overpoweringness with the feeling of dependence.

The three disciples were afraid of overpoweringness and even they couldn't look at Jesus. They look at the ground. But what happened next? Jesus came down to them and touched them, saying, *"Stand up and do not be afraid!"*. Afterward, they found no one and nothing but Jesus. This is the highlight of the transfiguration. The event of transfiguration is not only about Jesus' divinity or holiness but of Jesus' continuous openness towards our human beings. By the overpoweringness of Jesus, the disciples were also transfigured into the ones who found only Jesus, not fear or demoralisation. Pope Francis mentions the story of transfiguration in his Lenten message to remind us of the journey of Synod. Again, he appeals to us not to forget that we walk together, which means we grow together.

The Church listens to this story every second Sunday of Lent, not randomly but intentionally. That is because Lent is a time for our spiritual growth in many ways of meditating on Jesus' sacrifice, which is the biggest sign of his openness towards us. During Lent, we see together that Jesus is accompanying us. It is our turn to participate in Jesus' transfiguration, which is happening right here and right now. Secondly, Jesus is approaching us so that we can stand up from the points of fear, discouragement and any other negative elements. Through participating in Jesus' transfiguration, may we find magnificent growth in our minds and hearts.

Brothers and sisters, let us not imagine that the story of the transfiguration is only about Jesus' event. Christ invites us to participate in his transfiguration, and it happens in our daily life. St. Mary of the Cross said, *"There where you are, you will find God."* She may say to us today, *"There where you are, you will find Jesus who takes us to his sacred heart for our transfiguration in which he and we are fully united"*.

Let us give thanks to him for his openness to us experience his splendour and stay confident to walk towards him on the journey of Lent.

Peace

Deacon Minje Kim

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/030523.cfm>

