

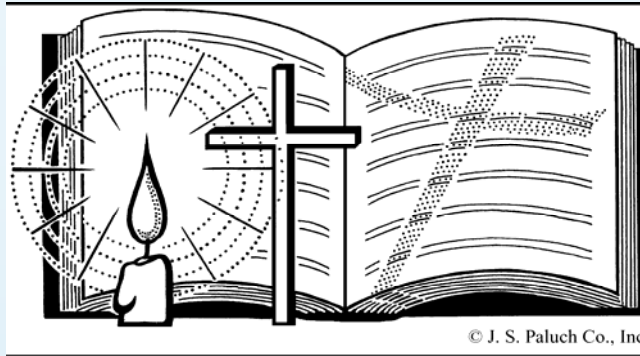
Moments of Transformation

Last week, I attended a surprise birthday party for one of our parishioners at one of the local bars. It is amazing how a simple and happy occasion can become a moment of profound joy and transformation.

I entered this event with little expectation other than sharing in birthday celebration of a wonderful parishioner and friend. In this gathering, there were family, friends and a number of people from St. Teresa. Something happened within me that wanted to stay, a reality that was frustrating because it was the Saturday we would lose an hour of sleep, and Sundays are big days for me.

In the midst of the sharing and laughter and eating, time became irrelevant and I experienced a profound unity with people at this gathering. I left the surprise party being very much surprised myself, by the way I left the bar. In short, I felt as though I was on cloud nine!! But I couldn't stay...I had to go back into the night and into a cab to return back here. That's life isn't it? These moments of transformation, or "transfiguration," are gifts given by a God of surprise. God asks that we receive them and then let go, walking back down the mountain, so to speak, and back into life. We are no different than Peter in wanting to stay and capture the moment but these moments are pure gift rooted in grace that no picture, YouTube or "selfie" can ever do justice.

We are given these moments to remember when faced with the experiences that test us and weigh heavy on the human spirit. We face the cross knowing that living through it will



Peter, James and John to keep moving forward. Take risks and let go even if it means making many mistakes. And in the moving forward will be moments like the one I experienced at a local bar "where everyone probably knows each other's name."

This is a moment of profound change and transition for this parish as we are about

to begin a year of faith celebrating our 125th anniversary. The reason we are still here and thriving is our ability to take risks and change. The renovation of the interior of the church, the letting go of the land on which sits the old convent and school buildings are two examples of our ability to move forward reimagining the physical structures to better serve our mission. One year from now the church and rectory and all the landscaping will be complete leaving us to address our much needed space for offices and ministries.

As we move forward, we do so rooted in a gospel vision of formation as disciples and outreach to the poor and un-churched. And God will surprise us with experiences that will bring us together in a unity of faith and purpose. May this weekly celebration of the Eucharist be such a time, a time of peace and reconciliation and a refusal to give into to fear.

— Fr. Frank Homily, Second Sunday of Lent, March 16, 2014

Fear turns us into cowards, creating lives that are so planned out and plotted they become lifeless and empty.

bring us to the "other side" which is new life.

Life is all about never getting stuck in patterns of living and believing that somehow become fossilized. We need to keep moving forward and often downwards off the mountain of transformation. The greatest obstacle is fear. Yes, we fear the unknown. We fear change. We fear not being in control.

Abraham and Sarah are models of human beings who are truly free, a couple who took the risk of letting go of the familiar...of family and village and certainty. In their old age they would give birth to the beginnings, the formation of a nation and a people "peculiarly God's own."

In Paul's Letter to Timothy he states that we don't have a spirit of cowardice but one of power and strength. Fear turns us into cowards, creating lives that are so planned out and plotted they become lifeless and empty. Jesus is calling us, as he called