

Keep Transfiguration as vision

I feel very blessed on this Sunday evening, the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord. I say that because this weekend was a rich one filled with experiences that help me to draw understanding and strength from today's Gospel story.

The Transfiguration story is both consoling and challenging. It is consoling because it renews our hope that we will one day share fully in the radiant glory of Christ's risen life. It is challenging because it reminds us that we will share in his glory only if we are willing to die daily to all that diminishes our friendship with him.

Remember that at the end of their exhilarating experience on the mountain Jesus told his companions to tell no one about it before the Son of Man had risen from the dead. Why? Because they were not yet ready to understand the connection between his dying and rising, which were still in the offing. The experience of his radiant transformation taught them a lot about who he was. The harder parts were yet to come.

But Jesus knew them and us well enough to know that we all need the strength of a vision, a dream, a hope to keep us going through the hard times. We are empowered by the Spirit to live in the love of Christ, but we are not exempt from the demands of love or its cost. We are not freed from the possibility of sin or suffering or disappointment in life.

So, occasionally at least, with gracious favor, Christ grants us mountain-top experiences. I refer to special moments in life that bring us closer to him, or to a loved one, or to those who have gone before us or increase our sense

along the way

BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK



of belonging in the communities that are most important to us.

God blessed me with mountain-top experiences this weekend. One was at SUNY Geneseo with more than 500 of our magnificent young people gathered for our Diocesan Youth Convention. I wish I could describe well what it was like to be in their midst. I think of their enthusiasm, their incredible gifts, their hospitality to one another, and their willingness to share their gifts, their faith and their desire to live the faith and make a difference for others.

When we celebrated the Eucharistic Liturgy together, I had the sense of being on the mountaintop. The Word, the Eucharist, the Assembly — those incredible kids and the adults who so love them — all revealed Christ to me, gave me a sense of being beloved by God and left me feeling deeply connected to our community of faith.

Another of the privileged experiences was with the people of St. Anne's Parish, Palmyra. We celebrated liturgy today in thanksgiving for 150 years of grace as a parish community. Those present at St. Anne represented a much

wider age range than there was at the convention. In fact, the range at St. Anne was from a few weeks to 99 years. But the Sunday celebration was no less vibrant than Saturday's. You could not miss the fact that this was a lively and faithful assembly. That was evident in word and symbol, in music and silence, in movement and gesture. Men and women, girls and boys all were present to give thanks and to offer praise to God, to offer their support and affection to one another. They reminded me, as our parishes so often do, just how beautiful our liturgical rites can be and how they give heart to the People of God. I know I drew much strength from this morning's act of worship.

What sealed both experiences as God-given for me were individuals who kindly shared with me some of their struggles. I mean persons like the young woman who is concerned that her parish community is not as warm and welcoming as it should be, another who grieves the recent loss of her father, a young fellow with a physical infirmity who is frequently taunted by his peers, another who struggles mightily with his sexuality, a widower still coping with the sharper edge of grief.

All give beautiful witness to the lesson of the Transfiguration. They will not let grief, stupidity, unkindness, their own shortcomings or those of others define them or limit their possibilities. They rely on the help of God to try to live in God's love no matter what happens. They inspire me to similar efforts and remind us all to keep the vision of Transfiguration before us every day.

Peace to all.

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 May through October at
 All Saints Mausoleum Chapel
 November through April at
 All Souls Chapel

Following Mass visitors are welcome to join our Bereavement Support Group, 9:30-10:30 am in the cemetery office building.

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