



Change – It’s What Keeps us Alive

2nd Sunday of Lent, Cycle A

March 12, 2017 – 5:00 p.m., 8:00 a.m., 12 Noon

1. In my first parish assignment an elderly woman waited for me after Mass
 - she greeted me, welcomed me to the parish and said to me, “Father, things here are always changing.”
 - I could feel my body stiffen up as if preparing for my defense
 - I thought this is one of those complaints I’ve learned about in seminary, when the new guy hears about everything wrong with the parish that I have to fix in my time here
 - but after saying, “things here are always changing,” she said, “and that’s what keeps us alive.” - sweet Jesus – relief!
2. For most of us, change is never easy
 - it seems we just get comfortable, when we think it’s smooth sailing, something new comes along, rattles us and find ourselves having to adjust
 - in the past few weeks I’ve heard from folks about the pope and how he’s trying to change too many things, about the president, about the parish
 - change unsettles us, it’s difficult, but often necessary
3. The Transfiguration we hear in today’s Gospel reminds us that change is difficult
 - it rocks our world
 - it demands reorientation and sometimes the change happens first, and then attitude adjustment follows – but it’s never easy
4. Peter today is caught in that suspension between wanting things to stay the same yet knowing that change is happening
 - so what happens? he wants to build tents.
 - it’s a great metaphor for this in-between experience
 - not permanent structures, but structures just the same
 - to give us more time, to hold on to something we likely know can’t be held
 - to capture briefly a moment that can carry us through the change about to occur
5. The Transfiguration is that threshold moment between what was and what is to come
 - you get a glimpse of what could be, when actually, it was all along
 - it’s not that we haven’t see the change coming
 - it’s not that we haven’t recognized what the change might look like
 - we just wonder if we’re ready, if we can handle it, if we’re prepared
 - we build temporary structures as an act of entrenchment but also to capture a

memory to hold onto to cope with what is to come
- for many people they look back and romanticize the past
- I remember when . . . life was simpler, people talked to each other, people ate meals together . . .

6. Peter wants to stay on the top of the mountain
 - but he also wants to hold on to the moment, to remember
 - and he needs the memory to stay – the glory, the confirmation, the assurance, the promise, the declaration
 - because he will need it later on – and big time

Letting go is almost impossible without the act of holding on

8. As we move into Lent, this seems essential
 - holding on when letting go
 - letting go of our control
 - letting go of certainty
 - letting go of our conviction
 - letting go of our judgments
 - letting go of our hurts, our pain, our addictions
9. The transfiguration is a fitting story to transition us to Lent
 - because it insists that we keep what was and what can be in tension
 - the paradox of Lent and Easter
 - of what is essential to Christian faith and what is changing
 - of what has been and what will be
10. Change, by definition, is a simultaneous holding on of what was, and a looking toward the hope of what can be - and that's what it's so difficult
 - change insists that you exist in a place you don't want to be
 - it creates a sense of grief over what was and excitement for what is to come
11. You can't really blame Peter for wanting to hold on while anticipating moving ahead
 - our Transfiguration moments happen when we know change has to happen yet we're not quite ready
 - when we're desperate to hold on and yet we know we have to leave
 - it's not all glory – just get over it and come down the mountain
 - it's a sense that change is necessary but it's hard to accept
 - it's about knowing what you need to walk into, but it's so hard to come to terms with why you should
12. Yes, things are always changing
 - but that's what keeps us alive