

**HOMILY**  
**March 3-4, 2007**

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**St. John the Evangelist Parish**  
**Davison, Michigan**

Have you ever watched a child open a card and find a brand new five-dollar bill? Have you ever watched a high school senior open an acceptance letter from their first-pick school? Have you ever watched a golfer after they search around the green only to find the ball in the hole? Have you ever watched a mother or a grandmother when they hold a new baby? Have you ever watched a father when he walks his daughter down the aisle? No words are needed; the look says it all. The glow speaks volumes—every word is written on the face.

In today's gospel, we are given a glimpse as to what it means to have a life forever changed by the presence of God. The church calls today's event *The Transfiguration of Christ*. Jesus was transfigured—the figure, the image, the look that he had, the face that showed to others was changed all over. Jesus glowed. It was a preview of his ultimate transfiguration.

Transfigurations are big business today. How many of us work hard and spend a lot of money to get one . . . a new face, a new look, a changed appearance? Transfigurations are big business because we are very aware of the face we present to the world. Sometimes the change is now just in looks but in our whole image, including our name. Issur Danielovitch Densky did not like the image he thought his name projected, so he changed his name to Kirk Douglas. In the same way, Frances Gum transfigured herself and her image into Judy Garland. Archibald Leach became Cary Grant. Aaron Schwalt became Red Buttons. And who would have paid money to see Marion Morrison in the movies? Maybe, but Marion didn't take the chance; he became John Wayne.

Remember that in the story of the Bible, many people got new names to go with a new life and a new image:

- + Abram became *Abraham*
- + Sarai became *Sarah*
- + Jacob became *Israel*
- + Saul became *Paul*
- + Simon became *Peter, The Rock*

Transfigurations are not the exception. They are the rule. We are all being altered not just in the appearance of our face, our countenance. We are all changing. To live in God is to continually be transfigured.

So who are we becoming? Perhaps some of you are discerning: “What does God want to make of me?” After a long process of discerning, some of you with us today will become baptized at Easter; still others here with us will be received into the Church and be confirmed into the Catholic faith. And what a precious moment—God literally puts his seal, his stamp of approval, upon you. And like the voice that came from the voice we heard in today’s story, we hear that voice say of us: “You, too, are my chosen ones.” Yes, who are we becoming? Once we had no name, now we bear the name *Catholic-Christian*. Once we were no people, now we are God’s people. Once we had no purpose, now we have a purpose and that purpose has a destination. Our brother, Paul, takes us further into that destination. The Lord Jesus will change our lowly body to conform to his glorified body.

Someone came up to me the other day in the Family Center. “Father, I have a question for you. Do you think we will be able to recognize one another and communicate with one another when we are in heaven?” With a prayer and deep breath, I simply said, “Sure, we are promised personal resurrection. We believe that our risen body will somehow be changed from the body we now have. Our present body would be like a seed planted, and our risen body would be like the totally new life of the plant rising from the seed. Though we believe that our risen body will be different from our present body, we will be able to recognize one another and communicate, too!”

Each day that I am privileged to continue my earthly journey, the more I have come to realize that the promise gives purpose and direction to the whole of my life. I have come to realize that our vision of the risen life gives us a goal which makes sense out of life. And not only that, but also meaning, especially in the places and times when life seems most senseless and meaningless. And so that’s the hope of the final transfiguration that is to come to you and me and everyone in Christ. The glorified life that we seek in him is why we gather week after week in this place, come together as God’s people seeking true and final transfiguration. When the priest lifts up the body and blood of Christ, we are offering everything that has happened this week to God—our joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, certainties and unknowns to God.

So I would like to suggest an assignment for you. I suggest that you spend some time today, or over the next few days, reflecting just on what the risen life with God might be like. Whatever your vision of risen life with the Lord, I would urge you to imagine it fully . . .

**See It**

**Smell It**

**Hear It**

**Taste It**

**Feel It**

Let your vision entice you. Let it enflame you with longing for that vision of our transfiguration is meant to help us focus the whole of our lives and to see that this very day is one step closer to the glory yet in store.