

My brothers and sisters in Christ, let us pray. God of our Light, revelation, and purpose, may the words of my mouth and the meditation of all of our hearts always be acceptable in Your sight, Our strength and our redeemer, Amen.

We might think that this Sunday is just a filler until Lent begins and we begin to be partners on Christ's journey on the Road to Jerusalem. We might think that after a sermon series that I hope challenged our hearts that we can move on to the next topic and stop talking about how hearts need to be engaged and awakened.

Well, then, if that's what we're thinking then there's some good news and some bad news. The Good News is that yes, this is a Sunday that in our worship planning is not part of any particular series of Sundays. The bad news is...well, actually there is none of that because whenever we talk about the Gospel it's Good News, right? That means that we are always going to be talking about awakening hearts, moving Spirits, and getting ourselves engaged in lives right here, right now, because God is Near, and God is here. Can I get an AMEN?

ALRIGHT, just seeing if y'all were awake out there.

The transfiguration is all about a couple of disciples witnessing something miraculous that they thought was no longer possible. The disciples were seeing a near-theophany...and a theophany means that God appears in a way that is direct and real. After the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, ancient Jews shortly after closed the canon of holy prophets, writings, poetries and wisdoms, believing that God had said all that needed to be said and was waiting for the people to respond.

And so what happened on the mountain, that these disciples were witnessing God in action...wellll, now that hadn't happened for a couple of centuries, so you can imagine that they were a little bit incredulous when they saw the heroes of their faith suddenly appear, and a cloud that had this voice coming out saying, "This is my son, with whom I am well pleased". And they were overwhelmed and fell to the ground and then when they looked up allll that was gone. And there's Jesus, but he did NOT have the white hair that Moses did after meeting God, but his clothes were a little cleaner for sure, and...welll...were they dreaming? What happened?

The disciples were lucky, this was an easy one that God transformed Jesus and so they needed to transform their hearts accordingly and do what Jesus said.

We are not so fortunate as to have these obvious events. But we do meet folks in our lives that can transform us, if we not just take those encounters seriously but we seek out those encounters.

The Youth Group sought our an encounter when they went to WAMS in Worcester and sought to make the Bridge Initiative a little more real meeting the homeless and those that have housing and food scarcity affect their lives. What they found was that these folks are persons just like them, folks who are kind and gentle and seeking lives of meaning and purpose, but not in the ordinary way that we are taught by accumulating possessions and amassing the wealth of Croesus. What I think happened in Worcester is that our young folks had their hearts transformed by seeing Christ's light shine that weekend.

We are spending an inordinate amount of time in the popular culture discussing undocumented immigrants. I wonder how many of us have actually met

an undocumented immigrant before forming an opinion that we then project onto all undocumented immigrants, irrespective of country of origin. When I was in California I wondered why we were unable to require employers who hired undocumented migratory workers to pay minimum wage and provide worker housing that had basic shelter and indoor plumbing, because this was an issue of basic human dignity. There was about a decade ago a movement to ask everyone to pay 1.5 cents per pound more for tomatoes and direct that money toward providing such dignity for undocumented migratory workers. Christ's light shone through their stories, of folks who sought to do nothing more than send most every spare penny they made back to their families where poverty was even more desperate.

Our confirmation kids will be traveling to Craigville next weekend to learn about what awakening the Spirit means and what the illuminating light of God manifests itself. Through sharing their own stories with those of other kids, the mere act of sharing in community their souls and fears and hopes and passions will guide them to new possibilities of illuminating their lives, and give

them the drive to seek out new opportunities to find those near-theophany moments, those moments where they can encounter others whose light shines because God has put light in their lives.

In celebration of the end of school vacation week, I'm going to end with those simple anecdotes, but I'd like for us to really think about where we can not only see, but FIND God's light, so that it can become a permanent part of us. Because when we see the world transformed, many, many things around us take on a different hue. A bright and brilliant one.

Debbie Boone had a hit song years ago, and when seen through the eyes of faith, it can have some deep meaning for our lives. Listen to the words:

So many nights, I'd sit by the window. Waiting for someone to sing me His song. So many dreams, I kept deep inside me, alone in the dark, but now you've come along....

And You, light up my life, You give me hope, to carry on, You light up my days, and fill my nights, with song.

Rollin' at sea, adrift on the water, Could it be finally,  
I'm turnin' for home? Finally a chance to say, "Hey, I love  
You", Never again to be all alone,

It can't be wrong, when it feels so right....Cause you,  
you light up my life.

Let's find out who can light up our lives. Go and be  
the witness to the world by being more in the world.

You, the people of God, light up MY life. And for  
that, thanks Be To God, Amen.