

Homily for the 2nd Sunday of Lent

Henry David Thoreau kept a journal. On August 5th in 1851 he wrote the following words: “The question is not what you look at, but what you see.” These words are a perfect summary of today’s gospel.

The disciples in the gospels have looked at Christ many times...daily...hourly. And yet today they see Christ as He truly is. Today they see Christ as the person transfigured in glory, radiating the power of God, conversing with the Moses and Elijah. For the first time the three disciples know they are in the presence of the Son of God and all that they see is confirmed in the voice that speaks to them from above and proclaims: “This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him.”

The question that might seem the most obvious is what do we see when we look out into the world? Where do we see the finger of God, the presence of God, the manifestation of God in our world today? Gerard Manley Hopkins, the great poet, said that “The world is charged with the grandeur of God.” Do we see it? Or, do we just look at the world and think how ordinary it is.

But I think that the deeper question is not so much what we see but rather what do others see when they look at us. Do they see a reflection of the presence of God? Do they find in us the compassion of

Jesus? Do they discover in us the wisdom and the understanding of the Holy Spirit? Or do they fail to see in us what the world often fails to see in so many people who describe themselves as believers?

The Season of Lent offers us an opportunity to take the time in order to discover in Christ the radiant light of God so that we, in turn, might bring that light to others. Lent offers us the time to embrace the power and glory of God. Lent invites us to turn our hearts away from the cold selfishness of our world in order to embrace the warmth and love and concern which is the true light that flows from the heart of Christ. And Lent bids and us to bring that light to others so that others may see in us what the disciples saw in Christ in that moment which we call the Transfiguration.