



By any earthly measure, Peter, James, and John had difficult lives. Peter and James would die as martyrs while John would spend much of his life incarcerated. They knew betrayal, persecution, torture, hunger, danger, sleepless nights, and the tragic death of loved ones. At the same time, Peter, James, and John lived with courage and profound hope which enabled them to suffer -- even to suffer joyfully -- for our Lord. They had a peace that surpasses knowledge, a peace that conquers the world, the peace of Christ!

In today's Gospel, Jesus fortifies Peter, James, and John with a special gift: they see with their own eyes Jesus transfigured and hear with their own ears the voice of God the Father. In reference to the Transfiguration of the Lord, St. Bede wrote, "Our lord, in a loving concession allowed Peter, James and John to enjoy for a very short time the contemplation of the happiness that lasts forever, so as **to enable them to bear adversity with greater fortitude**" (*In Conv.* 12.2).

**How do we bear adversity?** St. Peter, writing many years after he witnessed the Transfiguration, counsels us:

We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that unique declaration came to him from the majestic glory, "This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain. Moreover, **we possess the prophetic message that is altogether reliable. You will do well to be attentive to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.** (2 Peter 1:16–19)

Like Peter, James, and John we have received a prophetic message which is our "lamp shining in a dark place" and we "do well to be attentive to it," especially in times of personal darkness. No, we did not see with our eyes Jesus transfigured, nor did we hear the Father's voice with our ears, but we can see His majestic glory and hear His powerful voice if we but take the time and make the effort to look and listen with the eyes of faith. Remember, Jesus said to doubting Thomas, "Blessed are those who do not see, yet believe."

St. Paul teaches us how to bear adversity:

So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord, nor of me, a prisoner for his sake; but **bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God.** He saved us and called us to a holy life. (2 Tm 1:8,9)

Today our Lord invites us to look upon Him as He is in glory: infinite in beauty, peace, goodness, and love, and to be reminded that we will one day share in this sublime beauty if only we remain faithful through all the tribulations of life. Accordingly, St Paul encourages us:

"Therefore, we are not discouraged; rather, although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For **this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen;** for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Cor 4:16–18).

This is the powerful, life-changing, message of the mystery of the Transfiguration which invites us to see beyond what is seen – to see the infinite beauty and glory of God which remains constant through all the trials and difficulties of life – like a lamp shining in a dark place. Heavenly Father, give us eyes to see!

Your Servant in Christ,  
Fr. Terry Staples

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