



A clean heart create for me, God; renew within me a steadfast spirit. Do not drive me from before your face, nor take from me your holy spirit. (Psalm 51:12-13)

March 3, 2026

Hello Everyone —

When's the last time your face “shone like the sun” and your clothes “became white as light?”

A couple of weeks ago, we listened to how ‘Old Scratch’ took Jesus “up to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence.” This past Sunday, Jesus led Peter, James and John up a high mountain by themselves, and he was transfigured before them. What is it with high mountains? And those were quite different “showings.”

The difficulty with being transfigured is deciding whether to remain transfixed or to become transformed. Permit me a story, taken from life:

A 10-year-old boy had lost his left arm in a devastating car accident. Once he had recovered from a period of convalescence, he began judo lessons to recover his balance and to build his morale.

His instructor was an elderly Japanese master. The boy was doing very well, making real progress, but he could not understand why after three months of lessons his instructor had taught him only one move.

“Teacher,” the boy finally asked, “shouldn’t I be learning more moves?” The instructor responded, “This is the only move you know — and this is the only move you’ll ever need to know.” Not quite understanding but having faith in his instructor, the boy continued training and mastering his move.

Several months later, the instructor took the boy to his first tournament. The boy, to his own surprise, easily won his first two matches. The third match proved to be more difficult but after some time, his opponent became impatient and charged him. The boy employed his one move and won the match. Still amazed at his success, the boy was now in the finals.

Well, this time his opponent was bigger, stronger and more experienced. The boy appeared to be outmatched. Concerned that the boy might get hurt, the referee called a timeout. He was about to stop the match when the boy’s instructor intervened: “No, let them continue,” he insisted.

Soon after the match resumed, the boy's opponent made a critical mistake. He dropped his guard and the boy used his move to pin him. The boy won the match and the tournament.

On the way home, the boy and his instructor reviewed every move of every match. Then the boy finally summoned the courage to ask what was really on his mind: "Teacher, how did I win the tournament with only one move?"

"You won for two reasons," his instructor replied. "First, you have mastered one of the most difficult moves in all of judo. And second — the only known defense for that move is for your opponent to grab your left arm."

Truth be told — each of us has challenges to face that can stunt us and make us crooked.

The default setting is to think of these particular challenges as burdens — something — or someone — that demands so much of our time and energy. We consider whatever weighs us down — causes us pain and anguish — traps us in lives of desperation and despair — as the "crosses" we have to bear. We long for the day when we can lay our burdens aside — never to pick them up again.

But, as the boy discovered, often our heaviest challenge has the potential of being our greatest strength. These are moments when "transfiguration" on a very fundamental level take place. Many of our particular struggles possess the opportunity to be sources of hope — of joy — of discovery — of healing — of life for ourselves and others.

Jesus calls us — especially during this Lenten season — to transfigure the challenges of our lives into vehicles of resurrection. God lays on our able shoulders the strength to cope and grow — the ability to listen and console — the grace to lift up and lead. These crosses — when taken up in the same spirit of humble compassion with which Jesus took up his — possess the power to transfigure and transform us.

As I do for you, please pray for me,

Most Reverend Jeffrey S. Grob
Archbishop of Milwaukee

