

## Transfiguration of the Lord August 6, 2017

All three readings this weekend clearly introduce Jesus as the son of God. In two of them, God's own voice is heard proclaiming Jesus his son. God also says that he is very pleased with Jesus and to listen to him. Peter validates this truth by speaking of the enlightenment given to the early prophets and testifying that the disciples had seen these things occur with their own eyes. I wonder if each of us can recall the first time we encountered Jesus. For some, it might have been while we were visiting a hospital or nursing home. Others may have seen Jesus among those they help serve at St. John's bread line or one of the local food pantries. For some of the young people just returning from the Nashville area, it may have been while helping provide aid to someone in need. The point is that Jesus is all around us at all times and we just need to be available to him and be willing to answer his call whenever it comes.

My father has always reminded me of Jesus. He was an excellent carpenter and enjoyed working with wood. I learned from him how to identify different kinds of wood and the best uses of some of those. I wanted very much to be like my father and do the things he was doing. He was very gentle the day he told me that my body wouldn't last doing the things he did. His advice for me was that I should learn to use my head. He taught me to kneel down with my family and pray to the Lord every night. He taught me to give thanks to the Lord for the food set before us at meals, even if it were in a situation where I might feel a bit embarrassed. He taught me to pray to the Lord when I was faced with a situation I could not handle on my own. He always said, "The Lord is always with you and will give you the talents you need to succeed." My father taught us the importance of participating in the celebration of the mass. My father was one of four permanent ushers, my brother served on the altar and I had the much sought after position of ringing the church bell to call others to the celebration. Sickness is the only reason I can remember for not attending mass on Sundays and all holy days. A very important lesson he taught me was that school was my job; a job that you could not walk away from until it was completed. He brought three young Mexican workers home with him and showed me that their goals were very much the same as mine. These young men worked with my father and stayed with us all summer, until they were called home to work with their families. My father was there to assist me if I had difficulty doing my homework, and he would check it over when I thought it was completed. He taught me that no assignment is complete if it contains smudges or scratch outs. Only when your work was the

best you could provide, was it worthily of having your name applied. Mostly, my father makes it clear to me that he loves me as I am. I clearly realize that I have been greatly blessed in my life.

The family, as I knew it to be, has changed drastically. Some of the most intricate configurations of children who are loosely related to more than one “family” of half-siblings and shared between two or more of these odd groups according to some legal custody arrangement. Without a consistent, loving father figure, how are children and young adults expected to understand their loving father, God? How will they come to realizing the sacrifice and redemption offered by Jesus? I do not approve of the direction our country has taken during the last 8 years. I see too much individualism, too much divisiveness and too many young people lost in the rhetoric. Fortunately, I have a strong sense of hope when I observed the absolute beauty of the volunteerism of the many young people in our parish. If there be no others to reset the moral climate, let these be the example for future generations.

William Bellot