

Saint Anthony of Padua Parish

With the Eucharist at the centre, we are a community desiring to be saints, sent out to love like Jesus and proclaim Him in every circumstance.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

MARCH 8th, 2020

Experiencing Transcendence at Mass

The Gospel today is centered on a mountain experience, and Pope Benedict says that, “The mountain is the place of ascent—not only outward, but also inward ascent; it is a liberation from the burden of everyday life, a breathing in of the pure air of creation; it offers a view of the broad expanse of creation and its beauty; it gives one an inner peak to stand on and an intuitive sense of the Creator” (Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Vol. 1).

Every day, when we calm down and are peaceful, God the Father wants us to encounter Him in a transcendent experience, transcendent meaning beyond us, outside of this world. Most of our days we forget that He’s bigger than our daily problems, that we’re loved, that He has a plan for us, and that we’re hungering for something not of this world.

In the Gospel today, there are five ways that the Transfiguration of Jesus points us to a transcendent encounter with Him.

1) “Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves” (Mt 17:1). Mountains in the Bible are always places where something significant happens, usually an encounter with God: Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount on a mount(!), He spent nights in prayer there (Mt 14:23), and it’s where He sent out the disciples at the Great Commission; He also prayed at the mount of Olives just before His death (Lk 22:39), and was crucified on a hill. In the Old Testament, mountains are where Moses received God’s law, and where God made a covenant with His people. [...] And did you know that the Temple in Jerusalem was built on what’s called the Temple Mount? This is where God’s revealing of Himself happens in liturgy (Pope Benedict, 308-309), something we’ll come back to.

2) “And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white” (Mt 17:2). This means that Jesus is revealing His divinity. Normally, when people looked at Jesus all they saw was a man, but, for this brief moment, the three disciples see Jesus’ identity as God. His white clothes also show us where we’re called, because, in the book of Revelation, those in heaven wear white.

3) “Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him” (Mt 17:3). “There was mystery surrounding [Moses’ and Elijah’s death] and speculation about their future roles” in the coming kingdom (Daniel Harrington, *Matthew in Sacra Pagina*, 254-256), so, these two people also point us, not to the here and now,



but to the future.

4) “Then Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’” (Mt 17:4). In the Jewish liturgical calendar, there was a celebration called the Feast of Booths, where the Jewish people would dwell in tents for a week. This was a symbol of how they dwelt in tents when they were stuck in the wilderness for 40 years, but also of how, in the end times, they would also dwell in tents (*Pope Benedict*). So, St. Peter is thinking that they’ve reached the end, something transcendent.

5) “While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!’” (Mt 17:5). In the

Old Testament, the cloud hovering above the Tent of Meeting and the one that descended on Mount Sinai were a sign of God’s presence, and so now, a cloud overshadowing Jesus indicates that God the Father is present.

So, why did Jesus give these three disciples, Peter, James, and John, this transcendent experience? It was to prepare them for the Cross. These three disciples later on would also see Jesus at His weakest point, when He would sweat blood out of fear while praying in the garden of Gethsemani. In the same way, Jesus always brings us up the mountain so that we can face the problems of our life properly. He tries to remind us that He’s in control of our lives, that suffering is how we can become spiritually and morally strong, and that we’re made for eternal happiness.

Right now, we’re in the season *Loving the Liturgy*, and today I want to try to explain the **transcendent nature of the liturgy**, so that you know part of what God is trying to do every Sunday.

1) Most of the words of the Mass don’t change. Why? Because important words in life get stabilized and ritualized. In a 2016 baseball game in Toronto, one of the members of the Canadian quartet *The Tenors* changed the words of the national anthem, sparking outrage, and forcing them to issue an apology and not let that singer sing with them until further notice. Why? Because the national anthem is really important, and important words get ritualized. [...] If you’re dating someone, and you get to the point in the relationship where you build up enough courage to say, “I love you,” and the other person says in response, “Thanks,” you’re in big trouble, and not even God can save you—just kidding. The

...continued inside

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Parish Registration

Our parish family warmly welcomes new parishioners. Please register by filling out a registration form located in the vestibule or the Parish Office. If you are registered and moving, please advise the parish office.

Sunday Masses

Saturday 5:00 pm
 Sunday 8:00 am, 10:00 am, 12:00 pm

Weekdays	Masses	Confessions
Monday	8:15 am	8:00 to 8:10 am
Tuesday	7:30 pm	
Wednesday & Thursday	8:15 am	8:00 to 8:10 am
Friday (school months)	8:00 am	7:45 to 7:55 am
Saturday	9:00 am	9:45 am

Confession

Saturday afternoon 3:45 pm to 4:45 pm
 1st Saturday each month 9:45 am to 1:00 pm;
 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm;
 7:00 pm to 9:45 pm

Eucharistic Adoration enter at 1365 West 73rd Avenue
 Daily: 6:00 am to Midnight

First Friday of each month: 8:45 am to 10:00 am in the church followed by **Benediction**.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA) Please call the parish office for more information on RCIA classes and other Sacraments.

Weekday Masses & Intentions

Monday, March 9	Ferial	Jose Hernandez †
Tuesday, March 10	Ferial	Danny & Amy Venida
Wednesday, March 11	Ferial	Maximina Adolfo †
Thursday, March 12	Ferial	Fu Kwok Leung
Friday, March 13	Ferial	Jorge Mundo Sr. †
Saturday, March 14	Ferial	Clarita Hernandez †

Prayers for the Sick At Holy Mass we remember the sick including: Nita Carvajal, Nung Chum, Isobel Clancy, Elaine dos Remedios, Kathleen Francis, Feli Hempl, Yvonne Kharoubah, Philomina Mayer, Susan Panlican, Huguette Piché, Christina Sayo, Teresa Tche, Cynthia Wing.

Baptism this weekend!

Please join us in welcoming the newest member of our parish family. **Emily Chevalier** receives the Sacrament of Baptism on Sunday, March 8 at the 10:00 am Mass.



Upcoming Homily Themes

March 14 & 15
Being on Time for Mass

March 21 & 22
*Hitting the Wall:
 How to Deal with Suffering*

March 28 & 29
*From Fear to Hope For Our Children:
 A Request for Sacrificial Giving*

April 4 & 5
Did You Know That Jesus Sang?

April 11 & 12
Capacity to Suffer = Capacity to Love = Capacity to Rejoice

April 18 & 19
Do You Have Evidence For Your Faith?



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Join us for the Stations of the Cross, every Tuesday evening during Lent, starting **March 3 at 7:00 pm.**

CWL'S Women's Retreat: "Bringing Our Burdens to God" led by Fr. Pierre Leblond All the women of the Parish are invited to this Lenten retreat, here at our church on Saturday, March 14, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Please RSVP to aedge@telus.net so that we can prepare refreshments and plan accordingly.



2019 Income Tax Receipts are now available in the church foyer throughout the weekend, or at the Parish Office during the week from Tuesday to Friday, 9:00 AM—3:00 PM, tel. 604.266.6131.

Christopher West coming to the Lower Mainland

Where do we come from and where are we going? These questions are decisive for understanding what it means to be human and how to orient our lives and our actions toward authentic fulfillment. Join **Christopher West** and **Mike Mangione** as they creatively weave together dynamic presentations with live music, movie clips, YouTube videos, and sacred art for an evening of beauty and reflection on the meaning of life, love, and human destiny. You will come away with a faith-filled vision of hope that will instill in you the sheer wonder and joy of being alive. Join us on Thursday, April 30 at Good Shepherd Church in Surrey from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. Purchase tickets online at www.corproject.com/vancouver for \$35.



MAN OF THE SHROUD EXHIBITION
An extensive exhibit on the history, significance and scientific aspects of **The Shroud of Turin**

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ritualized response to words of this magnitude is, "I love you too!" So, whenever someone non-Catholic or our kids ask us, "Why does the Mass always repeat the same words?" The answer is: Important words get ritualized. And ritualized words are transcendent, pointing us to something higher and deeper. The best way to avoid these words losing their meaning is? To prepare. Next week, we'll talk about arriving on time for Mass, and, if we do, then we'll have time to prepare to mean the words we use every Mass.

2) The Mass, in many respects, is purposely designed to look, sound, and feel timeless. When does this church look like it was built? It's hard to say because it's a fairly classic church design. [...] It's true that that certain things in Catholicism change, and that's good, like how we reach out to people in evangelization, how we pray individually, but the most important things, like who God is, what Jesus did for us, and who we are, don't change, and it helps when churches are designed to look transcendent. [...]

The sign of the Cross is at least 1900 years old, and Catholics and Orthodox Christians will never stop using it. The whole world knows what it means, it's used in movies, and wherever you go, if you use it, you'll know you're part of a universal family. The *Our Father*, the *I Confess*, the *Gloria*, the creeds, the *Holy, Holy* are all ancient, thus communicating that there's more to life than the here and now. The way we celebrate Mass does have to adapt to people and cultures in order that the signs of Mass speak clearly, but there's another aspect where we have to adapt to the Mass and realize, "Whoa, this isn't something common place. I'm supposed to learn to be quiet, I'm supposed to learn to be reverent, and I'm supposed to learn to meditate."

3) Certain symbols are designed to be uncommon. As I've said before, the main advantage of receiving Communion on the tongue in this culture is that no one eats other food this way.

Right after Vatican Council II, when Catholics started receiving Communion in the hand, one of the unintended consequences was that people started treating the Eucharist like ordinary food; it's not ordinary food; Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist, and so uncommon signs like receiving on the tongue point to something special. People who receive on the tongue are not holier, but the sign value just says that this is something special.

The same goes with the vestments that the sacred ministers wear. And when do we kneel in daily life? Go to a public school and see when they kneel—they don't, because kneeling is something very sacred.

In 2007, I was really looking forward to starting a two-week vacation. But around 7:45 a.m., my mom left me a message to call her back. "This doesn't sound good," I thought. So I called her. "What's going on, Mom?" "We just got a phone call from L.A. and papa died of heart failure. Now how are you doing?" "I'm okay... How are you doing?" "Well, I'm in shock, but I've been praying for papa." "Okay, tell you what, Mom, let me just celebrate Mass and then I'll come home." So, I took a shower, cried, and then went to the sacristy. I was staying at St. Ann's in Abbotsford that day with Fr. James Hughes, and told him, "Hey, Fr. James, my dad just died." He was very kind and compassionate, but we didn't tell anyone else. But the best part was the Mass. It was so peaceful doing the right thing, the most important thing, and doing something I know by memory. [...]

I just love the Mass! That's where I want to go in my sadness but also in my joy. Take everything else and just give me the Mass. That was the greatest gift I could give my dad.

Every Mass, Jesus invites us up the mountain to encounter Him.

- Excerpt from Fr. Justin's homily, March 8, 2020.

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