

February 11,2024 – Transfiguration Sunday

“The Puzzle of Our Lives” by Pastor Julio Romero

Gospel: Mark 9:2-10

James Cisneros, in his book “You Have Chosen to Remember: A Journey from Perception to Knowledge, Peace of Mind and Joy”, asks the following question:

“Why is it that we have more faith that the pieces of a puzzle made by a company somewhere in Taiwan will all fit together than we have that the pieces of our life that are presented to us by God will fit together?”

One person chooses to put like pieces together first, while another chooses to put the edges of the puzzle together first, but neither individual ever really doubts that the puzzle will somehow fit perfectly.

The edges in and of themselves probably have little to do with the main image or idea of the puzzle, yet without it, the puzzle is incomplete. In fact, although these pieces appear to have little to do with the main idea or image, they are nonetheless as important to the puzzle's completion.

In the beginning some pieces, even when they fit perfectly together, might not help you to understand what the puzzle is about; only in its completion can you appreciate the parts that at first seemed insignificant and pointless.” (James Blanchard Cisneros, You Have Chosen to Remember: A Journey from Perception to Knowledge, Peace of Mind and Joy, p. 55)

If you have worked on a puzzle, you understand quite well what the experience I just describe to you is like.

This puzzle exercise makes me think what the experience of Jesus’ transfiguration meant for Peter, Andrew, James and John who were with Him at the mountain top when it happened.

Surely that moment was not a small piece in the puzzle of God’s plan of salvation. It was a huge piece, perhaps one that doesn’t fit on the corners and edges but very close to the centre in the story of our Lord Jesus.

The way I look at the story of the Lord’s Transfiguration is like the piece that had to fit in the life of Jesus as the final preparation for his walk toward the cross.

Jesus went to the top of the mountain to pray. That's what the Gospel says, but he went there to meet his Heavenly Father, to meet Moses and Elijah. It was an arranged meeting for our Lord in order to prepare the road to Jerusalem, in order to fulfill the expectation and belief that before the coming of the Messiah would happen, Elijah would appear first.

The Lord went to the top of the mountain to meet Moses, the one who received the Law, the Ten Commandments, from God's hand. Moses was there as a symbol that the Messiah had come not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it.

The Lord Jesus went to the top of the mountain to meet his Father, to hear from Him that in His journey to the cross He was not alone, that God the Father and the Holy Spirit were going to be with Him.

See how important the assurance that God walks with us is. It is no wonder that before a big task, before a big test or at the beginning of a new journey, we pray to God to walk with us.

At the mountain top our Lord Jesus got that assurance and affirmation of God's love. The event of the Transfiguration was a big piece in the Lord's puzzle of life.

Jesus knew where He was heading, He knew what the future had in store for Him and what the task ahead involved. As He was coming down the mountain, He ordered the disciples to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

From what the Scripture tells us, there is one piece in the puzzle of Jesus' life that He had preferred not be there. That piece is the cross, His suffering and death. However, the cross was at the centre at the puzzle of his life and the reason for his coming into the world.

The Good News is that the piece of His death would lead to the most important one, His resurrection. Without the resurrection the puzzle of Jesus' life would be incomplete. That is why He told his disciples about His death and resurrection. The Lord knew what the future had in store for Him.

For us, life is a mystery; we don't know what's waiting for us in the future. What we do know are the cards that life has dealt to us in the past, among them the pieces in our own puzzle of life that we wish would never be part of it. Those are the pieces that we think do not fit either on the edges or at the centre of this unfinished puzzle.

However, they are there; without them our puzzle of life one day would not be completed.

Those pieces can have many names, like bad memories, regrettable mistakes, misfortunes. Those are the events in our puzzle of life that have caused us pain, suffering and tears. But, whether welcome or not, those pieces have added something that otherwise we would have never known.

St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, said “³Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us” (Romans 5:3-5)

Certainly, without the cross there would not have been salvation, forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, which is our hope. So, it is with us, without challenges, suffering, pains and tears, we would not have known the true love and care of the ones close to us. We wouldn’t have known God’s grace, God’s mercy and hope of a new life, of a new beginning which is what gives shape to our Christian character.

Now, we don’t know how all the pieces of the past and the pieces yet to come will fit into the final puzzle of our life. Whether insignificant or not, each piece, each experience, is important, because each of them is part of our story, each of them makes up the person we are today and will be tomorrow.

Let’s learn to appreciate the big moments as well as the small ones, because in each of them there is a purpose that only God knows.

Some people like to say that “Everything happens for a reason”.

The Lord Jesus’ Transfiguration did happen for a reason. I already talked about that. It was a big moment in Jesus’ life, a big piece in His puzzle of life but that doesn’t mean that the small events in Jesus’ life were not important either. All those events together, and many more that were not written, made up the story of our Lord Jesus.

And so it is with us. Each event, each moment, whether small or big, is important. So, let’s give thanks to God for all of them because at the end, they will be our story and one step at a time they will reveal the reason why God gave us the gift of life.

Amen.

