

LISTENING TO JESUS: 2nd SUNDAY OF LENT B

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God says to us, "*This is my Son, the beloved. Listen to him.*" (Mk 9:7)

Someone giving a homily or sermon might sometimes wonder: "*How many people are really listening? Is anybody listening from start to finish? Will those listening now remember anything later on? In any case, can a homily ever start to change another person's life?*" I know of one particular instance where it really did.

(The story that follows comes from Paul O'Reilly SJ)

There's this man called Mark, who lives a long way away. At 12, he was a bit wild at school. At 14, he was smoking and drinking. At 16, he started taking drugs, mostly cannabis, speed and ecstasy. At 18, he moved on to heroin. At 19, he was injecting crack and heroin every day. At 22, his life seemed completely destroyed. He had no home, no family, and almost no possessions other than the clothes he stood up in. He had lost one leg when he was high and walked in front of a car. He had tried to kill himself three times - twice by taking drug overdoses, once by trying to hang himself. When he went to church, it was not to pray but to beg from the people there. He found that just after Mass, Christians there are generous.

But one Sunday, the gospel of the Transfiguration was read. In the homily he heard the priest say this:

"The meaning of the Transfiguration is that God does not make junk. God created the world - and what God makes is good. And 'If God is for us, who can be against us?'"(Romans 8:31)

At the end of his homily, the priest made all the people stand up and say with conviction, "*God made me; God doesn't make junk.*" So, along with

all the rest, Mark felt compelled to get up and say, "*God made me; God doesn't make junk.*"

But for many days later, those words burned into Mark's heart: "*God made me; God doesn't make junk.*" It became his prayer. It became his faith. It became his life.

With the courage of his new convictions behind him, Mark gave up drugs. He found a wife and he found a life. Not in a moment, of course, nor even in a few weeks, but over months and years he was transfigured and transformed. He took to heart the implications of the Transfiguration of Jesus, "*God made me; God doesn't make junk,*" and "*If God is for us, who can be against us?*" (Romans 8:31)

What about us? Where do we stand? Do we really want to be transfigured and transformed by listening to Jesus our Saviour – listening to his words, his teachings, his example, and his inspiration?

Do we? Surely we do!

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