**HOMILY FOR THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE ORDINARY TIME YEAR A**

**Feast of Transfiguration**

Once Fr Godfrey Dikeman, a monk of St John’s Abbey, Collegeville Minnesota was interviewed at the age of 92. He was an ardent worker of the 20th century liturgical movement and active player of the Vatican Council II. If you are young again, what would you fight again in the church? Without hesitation and with certain firmness in his voice, he said deification. Eastern Orthodox Church fathers called this “Theosis”, a transformative process through which one develops a likeness to God and enters into a union with God.

That’s why St Athanasius rightly said that “God became human, so that we human might become God.”

It means that God became a human being so that he might elevate our human nature to become sharers of his divine nature. So the goal of incarnation is one day we too become the citizens of heaven, we become members of God’s realm. Contemporary culture attempts to water down all religion to ethics, but in Jesus’ transfiguration we see that the final purpose of our Christianity is not that we become just nice people, people of golden hearts and morally righteous people, but rather we become transfigured as sons and daughters of God.

Let us closely look at the event on Mount Tabore. This ordinary man from Nazareth goes up to the mountain with three of his followers and the Gospel says that he was transfigured before them, his face shone with the radiance of the Sun and his cloth became dazzling white. The Greek word used for the transfiguration is *metamorphose*, morphose form or the shape, meta means beyond. Metamorphosis: to go beyond the form that he humanely has: so Jesus was transformed, enhanced in his manner of being. When this happens what is the response of the disciple? To prepare two or three tents, to dwell there forever. Dear friends, here on this earth we live perfect lives, we savour life, enjoy life, become successful, but still deep within our hearts we feel quite not at home, certain restlessness. According to C. S. Lewis this unfulfilled desire comes to us not only at the worse times of our lives but at the best times of our life, most successful and accomplished times of our lives. There we feel that there should be something more to life than this. Theresa of Avila puts this beautifully. This life is like a bad night in a bad lousy hotel. In other words, he is telling that it is not where you meant to be, it is not your home but a place you are passing through. This is not to say all things in the world are bad and sinful and I am waiting to get out of this awful world. No! It is to understand that there is higher spiritually fulfilling life awaits us, something more to this life awaits us. Hence, we need to keep our eyes and minds fixed on this divine life.

So our liturgy, our worship reminds us of our transfigured status. When we sing “holy, holy” at mass, it reminds us our souls harmoniously join and blends with choirs of angels; that transfigured life God offers us. The Eucharist that we receive at the mass is not meant to make not only good people, ethically nice people but primarily to christify us. To transform us to Christ and all the sacraments have this defying purpose which introduces the divine life into us. Baptism welcomes us to that divine life; reconciliation restores that divine life when it is lost due to sin; and confirmation strengthens and edifies that divine life God’s spirit gives us and Eucharist nourishes us with his very divine life; holy matrimony and holy orders gives us sense of direction how to trance our path to that divine life and anointing of the sick prepares us for the transition to our heavenly homeland. All the sacraments are about divine life.

Finally, prayers! I am sure that it can make us good people but its primary purpose is to unite us even now being in this earthly existence to the heavenly realm, to be conversant with angels and saints, to learn the language of God. So every aspect of Christian religion, including our moral conduct is meant to foster our transfiguration, until we are fully Christified into the image of Christ.