

03/12/17 2 Lent A

-- As Catholics, we hear this gospel of the Transfiguration of Jesus on the 2nd weekend of Lent. Many other Christian communities heard it two weeks ago, just before the beginning of Lent.

-- This year, right in between these two weekends, the movie *The Shack* premiered. It's based on a novel written in 2006. I'd read it about 7-8 years ago, so I went to see the picture this past Monday.

-- It tells the story of Mac, a man from Portland, Oregon. He's trying to heal from a horrible tragedy, when his youngest daughter was abducted from a campground on a Labor Day weekend trip.

-- Though her body was never found, the blood-stained dress she had been wearing was discovered in a broken-down shack a few miles from the campsite. She was presumed to be dead.

-- Some months later, he received a mysterious note inviting him to come to the shack one weekend. Most of the movie recounts an encounter he has which is strangely like the account of the Transfiguration, except the three characters he encounters are the three persons of the Trinity.

-- I know a number of people have already seen it, including our Life Teen group, and I don't want to reveal all the details. But this vision, however it took place, helped Mac to cope with his loss and have confidence in God's presence in his life.

-- Most of us will never have to face something as horrible as the murder of our child. But we will all face challenges in life, including letdowns and hurts. There will be times when God feels a million miles away.

-- Usually there are no easy answers that tie up life like a present with a bow on top. There weren't for Mac. But he learned to listen to God.

-- That's the most important thing we need to learn—to listen to God, especially as God is revealed to us in Jesus Christ. That may not come in visions and dreams (though we should not discount them).

-- But God speaks to us in many, usually more subtle ways. God speaks to us when someone we trust and respect gives us a word of encouragement or a word of challenge.

-- God speaks to us in the joys of our family, especially children. God speaks to us when others comfort us or we give comfort to someone who is suffering a loss in their own life.

-- And God speaks to us when we gather to hear his word and break the bread that becomes the Body of Christ in the Eucharist. When Pope St. John Paul proposed the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary, the Institution of the Eucharist was the final and most important one.

-- Guess what was the mystery right before it? It was the Transfiguration. That was not by chance. Here Jesus gave three of his apostles a glimpse of God's full glory.

-- But in the Eucharist, we receive the glory of God in his very body and blood. Christ poured out his life for us in giving us that gift and sealing it by the gift of his life given on the cross.

-- On my laptop computer, my screen saver is a picture taken when I was standing on the top of Monserrat in Spain. I had climbed up there with a fellow pilgrim from the monastery a couple of miles from the summit.

-- I'm sure many of you may have similar pictures of scenes you love and which remind you of a magnificent time, perhaps one when you felt God's presence in a special way.

-- It's good to have those reminders. But God is present in our lives all of the time. We have to listen well to notice that presence.

--May the Lord attune our eyes, ears and all our senses to his presence. May we recognize his presence in his Word, in the people around us and in the breaking of the bread.