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The Diocesan Family Conference - April 26, 27, & 28 2019

Guest Speakers: Bishop Hector Vila - Bishop of Whitehorse; Dr. Michel MacDonald - Catholic Organization for Life and Family; Jeff & Renee Lockert - Catholic Christian Outreach; FacetoFace Ministries; Cat.Chat; Bishop Albert Thevenot, M. Afr...Join us for the 3 Day Diocesan Family Conference - **Limited Registration; Register before April 5 2019.** For more information, email Fr. Millan Sajonas bmjs1981@gmail.com or adultfaith@padiocese.ca You can also contact the members of the Adult Faith Formation Commission or your local Adult Faith Formation Coordinator. Hoping to see you at the Diocesan Family Conference!

Suggested Materials:

- (1) *A Father Who Keeps His Promises: God's Covenant Love in Scripture* (book) by Scott Hahn;
- (2) *Knowing the Love of God: Lessons from a Spiritual Master* (book) by Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange;
- (3) *Remade for Happiness* (book) by Archbishop Fulton Sheen;
- (4) *Women Made New* (CD) by Crystalina Evert.

For more resources: padiocese.sk.ca or bmjsajonas.com



(Continued from page 1) Reflection Questions

1. Did you have an experience of God? How did this happen?
2. Where do you find moments of religious experience?
3. What are your realizations of this divine encounter?
4. How do these experiences transform you?
5. Do you communicate such divine encounters to others? How?

Next issue's contents:

Luke 15:11-32: The Parable of the Prodigal Son; Getting to know a patron saint of our diocese; Bible Study, Resources for faith formation, and much more...

Editors:

Sr. Mariette Bilodeau (SK, Canada), Matthew Allen Newland, PhD (QC, Canada), Fr. Millan Sajonas (SK, Canada), and Very Reverend Maurice Fiolleau (Vicar General).

ADULT FAITH FORMATION COMMISSION

Diocese of Prince Albert

IMDVS February 2019

Mark 9:2-13: The Transfiguration of Jesus

By Fr. Millan Sajonas

In Mark's Gospel, the transfiguration of Jesus is the glorious revelation of Jesus as the Messiah. The apostles had a glimpse of Jesus' heavenly glory. Moses and Elijah bore witness to the momentous event of God's visitation in the world through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father's voice resounded from the heavens, a manifestation and affirmation of Jesus' identity, "This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him."

Awestruck by the experience of the Lord's transfiguration and the vision of the two great prophets of Israel, Peter wanted to capture the moment and to prolong the experience. Filled with excitement and fear, he wanted to build three tents. God the Father's voice intensified the apostles' divine experience.

Jesus took time to commune with His Father. At times, we read in the Gospels that Jesus would go to deserted places to pray. He sets an example for all His followers of the importance of prayer, of reflection, and of discernment. It is creating a special moment with God, a religious experience, and an experience of the Divine. God will reveal Himself to the one who searches for Him and to the one who desires heavenly things. There is no disappointment, for the Lord does not turn anyone away. Rather He draws everyone to Himself. He will fulfill the longings of one's heart, giving satisfaction and real joy.

Everyone would like to reach the summit of the journey, and to have the experience of the divine. The apostles knew that they were going with Jesus, perhaps to find time to pray and to rest, away from the busyness of life. They went with the Lord not knowing fully what the journey would entail. Indeed, the apostles were amazed and astonished to experience the transfiguration of Jesus, seeing His heavenly glory unfolding before their eyes. God works in many ways and He reveals Himself in the least-expected circumstances of life. Yet, He manifests Himself even in the ordinary events of life. One has just to open the eyes of faith in order to see not with the human senses, but with believing eyes, expecting God's hands in everything. Like the apostles, such experience may bring fear, for they are an unusual occurrence, an intense encounter with the divine. The hope is that such an encounter be accompanied with enthusiasm and the desire of extending the divine encounter. There is a need to reflect, to discern, and to enjoy such an experience with the Lord because it is a time to strengthen one's relationship with Him. Like the apostles, there should be a motivation to build tents, to capture this special moment with the Lord.

However, the religious experience of the transfiguration did not stop there. Jesus and the disciples went down the mountain and joined a large crowd and the rest of the disciples. They had to get back to the crowd in order to continue the mission (Matthew 9:14ff). The divine experience has to be shared with others. God's revelation serves as an energizing experience, so as to continue the work in furthering the Lord's Kingdom and to reveal Him to others. A revelation of God is not only meant for oneself, but its purpose is to reveal Him in the encounter with others. Therefore, the transfiguration experience of the apostles transformed them but it also was meant to transform others by the witness of love and charitable deeds. (Reflection Questions Continued in page 4)

Getting to know...St. Agatha, Virgin and Martyr. We have her panegyrics, by St. Aldhelm, in the seventh, and St. Methodius, Patriarch of Constantinople, in the ninth centuries; also a hymn in her honour among the poems of Pope Damasus, and another by St. Isidore of Seville, in Bollandus, p. 596. The Greeks have interpolated her acts; but those in Latin are very ancient. They are abridged by Tillemont, t. 3, p. 409. See also Rocci Pyrrho, in Sicilia Sacra, on Palermo, Catana, and Malta.

The cities of Palermo and Catana, in Sicily, dispute the honour of her birth; but people will do much better if they, by copying her virtues and claiming her patronage, strive to become her fellow-citizens in heaven. It is agreed that she received the crown of martyrdom at Catana, in the persecution of Decius, in the third consulship of that prince, in the year of our Lord 251. She was of a rich and illustrious family, and having been consecrated to God from her tender years, triumphed over many assaults upon her chastity. Quintianus, a man of consular dignity, bent on gratifying both his lust and avarice, imagined he should easily focus his wicked designs on Agatha's person and estate by means of the emperor's edict against the Christians. He therefore caused her to be apprehended and brought before him at Catana. Seeing herself in the hands of the persecutors, she made this prayer: "Jesus Christ, Lord of all things, you see my heart, you know my desire—possess alone all that I am. I am your sheep, make me worthy to overcome the devil." She wept, and prayed for courage and strength all the way she went. On her appearance, Quintianus gave orders for her to be put into the hands of Aphrodisia, a most wicked woman, who, with six daughters, all prostitutes, kept a common stew. The saint suffered in this infamous place assaults and stratagems against her virtue infinitely more terrible to her than any tortures or death itself. But placing her confidence in God, she never ceased with sighs and most earnest tears to implore His protection, and it was able to outmatch all their hellish attempts the whole month she was there. Quintianus, being informed of her constancy after thirty days, ordered her to be brought before him. The virgin, in her first interrogatory, told him that to be a servant of Jesus Christ was the most illustrious nobility and true liberty. The judge, offended at her resolute answers, commanded her to be buffeted and led to prison. She entered it with great joy, offering up her future conflict to God. The next day she was arraigned a second time at the tribunal, and answered with equal constancy that Jesus Christ was her life and her salvation. Quintianus then ordered her to be stretched on the rack, which torment was usually accompanied with stripes, the tearing of the sides with iron hooks, and burning with torches or matches. The governor, enraged to see her suffer all this with cheerfulness, commanded her breast to be tortured, and afterwards to be cut off. She made him this reproach: "Cruel tyrant, do you not blush to torture this part of my body, you that sucked the breasts of a woman yourself?" He remanded her to prison, with a severe order that neither salves nor food should be allowed her. But God would be Himself her physician, and the apostle St. Peter in a vision comforted her, healed all her wounds, and filled her dungeon with a heavenly light. Quintianus, four days later, not the least moved at the miraculous cure of her wounds, caused her to be rolled naked over live coals mixed with broken pot shards. Being carried back to prison, she made this prayer: "Lord, my Creator, you have ever protected me from the cradle; you have taken me from the love of the world, and given me patience to suffer: receive now my soul." After saying these words, she sweetly gave up the ghost. Her name is inserted in the canon of the Mass in the calendar of Carthage and in all martyrologies of the (Continued in page 3)

(Continued from page 2) Latins and Greeks. Pope Symmachus built a church in Rome on the Aurelian Way under her name, about the year 500, which is fallen into decay. [1] St. Gregory the Great enriched a church which he purged from the Arian impiety with her relics,[2] which it still possesses. This church had been rebuilt in her honour by Ricimer, general of the Western Empire, in 460. Gregory II built another famous church at Rome, under her invocation, in 726, which Clement VIII gave to the congregation of the Christian doctrine. St. Gregory the Great[3] ordered some of her relics to be placed in the church of the monastery of St. Stephen, in the Isle of Capreae, now Capri. The chief part, which remained at Catana, was carried to Constantinople by the Greek general, who drove the Saracens out of Sicily about the year 1040; these were brought back to Catana in 1127 is recorded by Rocci Pyrrho and Bollandus.[4] The same authors relate in what manner the torrent of burning sulphur and stones, which issue from Mount Aetna, in great eruptions, was averted several times from the walls of Catana by the veil of St. Agatha, (taken out of her tomb,) which was carried in procession. Also through her intercession, Malta (where she is honored as patroness of the island) was preserved from the Turks who invaded it in 1551. Small portions of relics cf. St. Agatha are said to be distributed in many places.

The perfect purity of intention by which St. Agatha was entirely dead to the world and herself, and sought only to please God, is the circumstance which sanctified her sufferings, and rendered her sacrifice complete. The least cross which we bear, the least action which we perform in this disposition, will be a great holocaust, and a most acceptable offering. We have frequently something to offer—sometimes an aching pain in the body, at other times some trouble of mind, often some disappointment, some humbling rebuke, or reproach, or the like. If we only bear these trials with patience when others are witnesses, or if we often speak of them, or are fretful under them, or if we bear patiently public affronts or great trials, yet sink under those which are trifling, and are sensitive to small or secret injuries, it is evident that we have not attained to true purity of intention in our patience; that we are not dead to ourselves. We profess ourselves ready to die for Christ, yet cannot bear the least cross or humiliation. How agreeable to our divine spouse is the sacrifice of a soul which suffers in silence, desiring to have no other witness of her patience than God alone, who sends her trials; which shuns superiority and honours, but takes all care possible that no one knows the humility or modesty of such a refusal; which suffers humiliations and seeks no comfort or reward but from God. This simplicity and purity of heart; this love of being hidden in God, through Jesus Christ, is the perfection of all our sacrifices, and the complete victory over self-love, which it attacks and forces out of its strongest entrenchments: this says to Christ, with St. Agatha, "Possess alone all that I am." (Taken from EWTN's article St. Agatha, Virgin and Martyr, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/MARY/AGATHA.htm>)

Her feast day is on February 5. She is the patron saint of the Roman Catholic Church of Shellbrook, Saskatchewan that bears her name. She is also the patron saint for rape victims, breast cancer patients, wet nurses, bellfounders, and an intercessor for people who have suffered from fires. Let us pray through the intercession of St. Agatha that we may have an increase of vocations to the priesthood and religious life in our diocese, men and women willing to dedicate themselves in the vineyard of the Lord. We pray also for all the families striving to bear witness to their faith that they may be given the necessary graces to be signs of God's goodness and love.