

Parent Community Newsletter

Feast of Our Lord's Transfiguration. From "Beauty" to "Beast."

Edmonton Catholic Schools

August-September 2024

Praying with Icons. Windows into Heaven. Growing in Our Friendship with Christ.

We recently celebrated the Feast of Our Lord's Transfiguration. The Feast can serve as a source of inspiration and orientation for us as we return from summer vacations and begin a new School Year and a new Liturgical Year.

We read in Matthew's Gospel: "At that time, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white" (Matthew 17: 1-2).



In the icon, we see Jesus in prayer atop a mountain. Three of the apostles, Peter, James, and John are situated at the bottom of the icon. On Jesus' left and right are Moses and Elijah from the Old Testament. Jesus begins to shine with bright rays of light.

From the icon, a reflection of Matthew's Gospel, we learn that Jesus is at one and the same time truly divine and truly human. At his transfiguration, Jesus masked his humanity – his human body, and revealed his divinity to Peter, James, and John so that when it came time for his passion and death upon the Cross, the disciples would be strengthened when Our Lord voluntarily endured his sufferings.

But there's much more to the story.

Jesus takes upon himself our humanity that we might take upon ourselves Jesus' divinity. We, who are created in the image and likeness of God, carry within our very own genes the capacity to become holy, that is, to resemble God's goodness.

Think of it in terms of Disney's "Beauty and the Beast," based upon an age-old tale where young Belle is taken prisoner by a beast in his castle. In time, and with the help of the castle's staff, Belle is able to look beyond the beast's ugly exterior and instead see the kind heart and soul of the true prince inside. The two then fall madly in love one with each other.

In the Bible's telling of the same story, when Adam and Eve try to take the place of God, but without God, they are expelled from the Garden of Eden. Their true self is disfigured and they are forced to cover themselves with a foreign garment, "leaves" according to the Sacred Scriptures. Adam and Eve's true nature becomes unrecognizable, becoming like the Beast in "Beauty and the Beast."

Yet God never abandoned Adam and Eve. God never abandons us. God sees beyond our sinful nature, recognizing the kind heart and soul of the true prince and princess that each of us truly are, just as God created us from the very beginning.

You see, our Lord's transfiguration is a foreshadowing of our very own transfiguration. Our original beauty has been restored. Through Our Lord's sacrificial love on the cross, we have been transfigured from the Beast into Beauty. Thank you Jesus for this incredible gift!

As we begin a new School Year and a new Liturgical Year, may we be inspired by Belle's journey which led her to discover the prince within the beast. And may our own journey draw us nearer to Christ through prayer, kindness and love, where our true beauty of being made in the image and likeness of God may shine forth for the whole world to see!

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Wishing you a blessed and enjoyable School Year!

Bishop David Motiuk
Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton