

LET US SEE YOUR FACE, O LORD AND WE SHALL LIVE

In today's gospel we hear that on the top of Mount Tabor, Jesus was with Peter, James, and John. Suddenly, something happens. His face starts to glow. We are told it "shone like the sun." Even his clothes became dazzling white. A few short months later, others will see his face. It will be covered in blood, scars, spittle. It will be so bruised as to make him unrecognizable. The other face of Jesus.

The human face is an amazing reality, an amazing part of creation. Without ever saying a word, our faces can reveal a great deal. Our faces can communicate what is going on inside us, even deep inside of us. In Jesus, the Invisible God now has a face, a human face, like ours. God wants us to be able to see his face. God desires us to be able to see his love shine forth as we gaze upon his countenance.

Our faces show forth all manner of things. There is anger. Rage and fury.

Our faces can grow hard and stony or look fierce and frightening.

Our faces can exhibit our concern for a person or a situation. Others can read worry or upsetment, care or hope, desire to relieve another's pain or suffering.

Our faces reveal our faith. I see it as I distribute Communion. I see the wonder or the awe, the peace or contentment. The gentleness.

Our faces show our devotion, our attention, our dedication, our reverence.

Our faces show the stress we are under, the anxiety we internalize, the dread we sometimes face.

Our faces show forth the joy at a new birth or at family celebrations or a new love.

Our faces can show the grief at the loss of a loved one.

Recently I participated in the funeral of a young man. Thirty-three years old. Leaving a spouse, two brothers, a mom and dad. I saw their faces. You could see into their souls just briefly. Such pain.

Recently I anointed an eighty-seven-year-old woman in her living room. Many ailments and experiencing discomfort. She put on a brave front. Smiled. Joked. But in her eyes, there was that look. Is this it for me? You could see it in her face.

I saw the look on the face of a woman receiving Holy Communion at a Mass for her deceased father over forty years ago, as I gave her a piece of my host. Just a momentary look. Fleeting. Then gone. But a connection. Will I really see him again?

Then there is little Penelope who comes every Sunday skipping over to me for her Sunday hug. Smiling. Twirling. Shy. Bashful and yet bold. There is the innocence and simplicity. It is visible in her face.

I am instructing a man in his late forties who is finally going to complete his sacraments and then be married in the Church. Getting it right finally. His face says how thankful he is for this chance to get it right. It is all right there to see in our faces.

And our love. That is there too. And it is so important that we do not hide our love from showing in our faces. No. We cannot give in to the secrecy of not letting our love be seen. The world needs it. We need it. That is what Jesus is teaching us in the gospel. No matter what will come. Remember this day. Remember the way my love made my face shine. That is real. That is what will triumph. Death is not the last word. Love is. Let your love shine. Do not be Afraid. Let your face show the love for Christ that is in your heart.

May the Lord bless us today and give us his peace.