

Transformation in Christ.

By Father John Catoir, JCD -7/3/17

According to Father Thomas Radcliff, a former Superior General of the Dominican Order, “This is what the phrase transformation in Christ means: We become, by God’s grace, what others need us to be, namely, a ‘living Presence.’ We are no longer our natural selves.”

The word transformation is defined as ‘a thorough change in one’s manner and appearance’. Becoming more Christlike is a matter of acting with kindness, mercy and justice. As these acts become habitual, they form one’s character and destiny.

Being present to the needs of others implies a commitment. You allow the Lord to live in you, and act through you. The transformation in Christ brings about a thorough change in your appearance, because your actions profoundly affect the way you appear to others. A Christ-like person is admirable and kind.

Father Radcliff tells the story of Pope John XXIII, who in 1960, astonished a group of Jewish dignitaries with this greeting, “Good morning, I am Joseph your brother.”

When he entered the room, he no longer thought of himself as the Pope, but by God’s grace, he became what his Jewish guests needed him to be at that moment: a true brother.

The needs of others call for a Christlike response. Cathleen Kaveny, a Catholic writer, described the feelings of the average layperson in these words, “Most Catholics do not encounter God as a solitary individual, but in the context of families, parishes, and the larger Church. We see God’s identity enmeshed in a rich texture of rituals and relationships.” In other words, we not only

see Christ in our neighbors, but we become Christ to our neighbors.

When your self-awareness is tuned-in to the supernatural, you attain a higher level of understanding. This understanding is not based on feelings, but on supernatural facts. It is a matter of faith. Through faith we know that Christ abides in us, always helping us to attend to the needs of others.

The secular world does not think this way. It has forgotten its purpose and direction. We, on the other hand, hold fast to the core wisdom found in the Apostle's Creed, "We believe in the Holy Catholic Church, **the Communion of Saints**, the forgiveness of sin, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting Amen."

As Christ-bearers, we are at our best when we are messengers of joy. Jesus said, "In this world you will have many troubles, but be of good cheer, take heart, for I have overcome the world...fear is useless, what you need is trust."

I would like to conclude with my favorite quote from Pope John Paul II, "Christ came to bring joy, joy to children joy to parents, joy to friends and families, joy to the sick and elderly, indeed Christ came to bring joy to all people. Joy is the keynote messenger of Christianity and the recurring motif of the Gospels. Go therefore and become messengers of joy."

Jesus Christ is within you at this very moment. Imagine Him saying, 'Thank you for trusting me, and allowing me to live in you. Thank you for the many years of struggle and suffering you have endured to bring my love and joy into the world.'

