

## A\_TRANSFIG\_2017

Ok, I want everyone who's had any kind of vision correction - eye glasses, contacts, Lasik surgery, etc. ...to raise your hand....According to the Vision Council of America, about 75% of us need some kind of vision correction...If you're part of the 25% who don't, you're very lucky,...but your time might come. ...If you find yourself picking up the TV remote to make a cell phone call,... or you think you're better looking every time you see yourself in the mirror,...then it might be getting close to that time...Well, anyway, there's another kind of vision correction that almost 100% of us will need at different times. And it's not one that eye doctors can do...It's the kind of vision correction only God can do...A dramatic example of this happens in today's Gospel on this Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord.

On that mountaintop, God gave the apostles, Peter, James, & John, a new, clearer vision of the REAL Jesus, this man they had followed for 3 years, this man they thought they knew...On that mountain they saw Jesus as they'd never seen Him before – transfigured before their eyes...His face as radiant as the sun,...His clothes reflecting dazzling white light...They saw Jesus in all His heavenly glory...And when those men heard God's voice from out of the cloud,.. it removed any doubts they may have had about who Jesus was....This was no ordinary prophet, no run-of-the-mill messiah. ... This was God's beloved Son...God had given Peter, James & John a vision correction...God had shown them the human Jesus transfigured into the divine Christ, the Son of God

The vision correction those disc experienced on that mountaintop profoundly changed their relationship with J... They had seen the real Jesus....They saw Him through God's eyes; they saw the Jesus that had been there all along, but that they had failed to recognize...There is a vital lesson we can draw from this Transfiguration event...Like those disciples, we rarely see beneath the surface to see in people what God sees....Instead we usually focus on the externals, what we see on the outside. We base our judgments of others on just a small part of who they really are...& when we do, what often happens is that what we think & feel about them & how we relate to them often ends up being so wrong.

Author Steven Covey wrote a best selling book called *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. ...He tells of an experience he had on a NYC subway one Sunday morning...If you've ever ridden the NYC subway, you know it's usually not a very pleasant experience, except maybe on a Sunday morning when it is relatively quiet...And that's how it was the morning Steve describes...Some people were reading newspapers, some were dozing, others just sitting quietly....It was a peaceful scene until a man & his three children entered Steve's car...Almost immediately, the kids started yelling back & forth ,...throwing things around, even grabbing people's newspapers, disturbing everyone...Yet the father just sat there across from Steve, stared down at the floor & did nothing.

Steve said he was trying not to get angry....But, he couldn't believe the man was being so inconsiderate, letting his kids run wild in that subway car & doing nothing about it...Finally, he couldn't take it any longer...He had to say something, and - with remarkable restraint – he said to the man, "Sir, your children are really bothering a lot of people...Can't you control them a little bit more?"...The man slowly lifted his head as if he was regaining consciousness & said, "Oh, you're right. I should do something about it...We just came from the hospital where their mother died an hour ago...I don't know what to do, & I guess they don't know how to handle it either."

Can you imagine how Steve felt at that moment?...He said he suddenly saw things differently...& because he saw differently, he felt differently. He acted differently...His heart was moved by this man's pain & he spoke words of compassion: "You're wife just died? I'm so sorry. ...Can you tell

me about it? Can I help?"...Now nothing had changed in that subway car; the same people; the same annoying kids; the same disconnected father...What did change was Steve....God had corrected Steve's vision of it all, & it totally changed how he related to that dad & his kids.

Steve still remembers them & continues to pray 4 them...But, you know, it doesn't always work out that way...Steve could've gotten off that subway not knowing the truth,...thinking the man was just a thoughtless jerk with uncontrollable brats, and that man & his children would've had only scorn & contempt, instead of the compassion & prayers of another human being. ...That's what often happens when our judgments & opinions about a person or group are based solely on what we see on the outside,...when we don't know or care to know what might be going on inside them. ...Jesus, in everything He said & did,...made it clear that when it comes to judging others,...what we see with our eyes isn't the whole picture... The Book of Samuel tells us, "God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."...We have to look past the exterior & into the heart...& that isn't easy for us...We need a vision correction that only God can give us.

You know, we all have to deal with people who annoy us,...who rub us the wrong way,...people who don't leave us alone,...people who get us angry,...people we don't want to be in the same room with. ...people we don't trust...even people who insult us or put us down...And when we do, how often do we think badly of them,...maybe even wish them harm?...We can't seem to get past our negative perception of the person,...whether it's their appearance,...their mannerisms, ...their attitude, the things they say, the things they do...All this negativity is Satan distracting us,... getting us to forget that this person has been created in God's image; this person is someone Jesus deemed worth suffering & dying for,...keeping us from considering that maybe this person has things in their past or in their life right now that could at least partially account for why they are the way they are, ...& why they do what they do...And when we fail to see them as Jesus sees them,...it's because we see them only with our eyes,...while Jesus sees them with His eyes & His heart....

So, how do we invite God to correct our vision?...How do we open our mind & heart to see what Jesus sees in those people we have a hard time with?...I know the first thing I need to do is to remind myself of how Jesus sees me...I need to remember that His love for me doesn't depend on me being perfect...on me being free of any quirks, bad habits, or selfish behavior...He looks past all those things & sees the goodness, the potential for godliness in me...He loves me just the way I am, but He's never going to give up trying to make me better...The 2<sup>nd</sup> thing I need to do is to be open to the vision correction only He can give me..."Jesus, I'm having a big problem with this person...Please show me how you see them...Show me how much you love them." Then, I have to surrender to the Lord...and allow my mind & heart to see what He sees. ..

This is what happened on that NYC subway...God gave Steven Covey a look into that father's heart because Steve was open to it...If he had angrily lashed out at that father, instead of patiently asking him to control his kids,...the situation could've become a lot worse, a lot more heated ....and the two men's hearts wouldn't have connected in the way they did...

My friends, like Peter, John & James on that holy mountain, & Steven Covey on that subway, there will be times when the Lord will give us a glimpse into another person's heart to see them as He sees them...But that can only happen if we are willing to let the Lord open our eyes & clear up our vision...It can only happen if we can let go of all our prejudices & wrong assumptions & fears...that fog up our vision...In a few min as we come to receive the Lord in Holy Communion, let this be our prayer: "Lord, give me eyes like yours...Give me a heart like yours...so that I may see others & love others as you do." ...AMEN!