



8 March 2009

Dear Parishioners,

In his book “Interior Freedom” Jacques Philippe states that one of our deepest needs is the need for identity. He writes:

**We need to know who we are; we need to exist in
our own eyes and other people’s.**

He goes on to say that this need for identity can lead to aberrations: by seeking our identity in material possessions, “trying to satisfy a need for *being* by *having*. It may keep us happy for a while, but that doesn’t last and disappointments soon come.”

Or, we can seek our identity through “acquiring and exercising certain talents whether sporting, artistic or intellectual. There is then the risk of confusing *being* with *doing*.” Our true identity cannot be found in what we possess or in what we do. Who we are is rooted in something much deeper than that.

In today’s Gospel on this 2nd Sunday in Lent, Jesus is transfigured on the mountain and in the presence of three disciples. And in that revelatory moment when the ‘cloud’ parts momentarily, Jesus sees with “dazzling” clarity that he is the Beloved Son. With his own eyes and conscious of God’s presence Jesus sees that his identity finds its origin in being loved for who he is uniquely. It is not found in what he has or in what he can do. All of that, inevitably, is stripped away. Yet, this identity remains intact even in death.

With time, each of us must be brought to this same experience: to know that we, too, are God’s own. In all our uniqueness we are sons and daughters of God; and that our identity and who we are is only discovered “in love by the one we love” (Merton). Coming to sense the love of God in this way is pivotal. It saves us from the illusion that who we are is only discovered in what we have and in what we can do. Only in God and through the eyes of love do we discover who we are uniquely, in spite of the mixed motives, the sin and fear that cloud our lives at times.

Within our most ordinary lives, may we arrive at this mountaintop experience of Christ and like him discover who we are, and know that we are loved as we are.

Father Tim Clark