

From this week's Epistle, from the Second Letter of St. Peter:

You will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 1 St. Peter 1:1-b

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In the home where I lived as a child in Saint John we had a small room; something really too small to be even called a room, tucked under a stairwell. A tiny place that was little more than a cubby-hole. A room which, in spite of its incredibly small size, was home to the largest assortment of odd and ends that you can imagine.

In that tiny room we kept all of those things which we no longer used but couldn't convince ourselves to part with; those things which had little part in everyday life, but were kept around, just in case we might one day need them.

Several old trunks were kept there, filled with the kinds of things that one usually puts in old trunks: long-forgotten toys which were missing pieces or had lost their appeal; clothes that were long out of fashion, assuming that they'd ever once been in fashion; old rusty skates, and the usual assortment of worn-out gloves and sports equipment; broken hockey sticks and well-used baseball bats were somehow stuffed into this space; with a great variety of broken and unused tables and stands and picture frames filling in what small spaces were available.

Anything that wasn't good enough to keep in any other part of the house, in a place where people might actually see it, inevitably ended up being thrown into this tiny hole; until you could barely see beyond the first few feet.

Well, every once in a while, someone had the bright idea that this room just had to be cleaned up. They'd start the job by systematically clearing everything out so that some hard decisions could be made; decisions about what could stay and what had to go. Hours would be spent at the job, until, by the time everything was done, all the stuff had been systematically removed was just as systematically returned. At best, things might have been a bit better reorganized, but nothing had actually been removed.

Maybe you have a similar kind of room in your home. It's the kind of place where you can hide all of your stuff; a room where you can just shut the door and forget all about it, until the next time that you happen to open the door and the light floods into the room, and all that has been long hidden becomes obvious and apparent and unavoidable. While it's in there in the dark it doesn't really bother you; but once the light gets in, it's there for all to see.

Imagine, for a moment, that I'm not just talking about some small cubby hole in your house. Imagine, for a moment, that I'm talking about the kinds of places that we carve out in our souls. Bear with me for a moment.

In a sense, each one of us has those private thoughts, maybe those personal axes to grind, those half-suppressed grudges and unresolved hurts, those long-harboured resentments; or those things which we should be doing that we haven't done; or those things that we shouldn't be doing but still do; those long-forgotten moments and memories that we try to desperately keep to ourselves.

We store them away because we don't want to think about them or, still worse,

do anything about them. And we keep them hidden away in the dark because we don't want others to know we have them; but we still can't bring ourselves to throw them away.

Maybe, every once in a while, we resolve to clean things up, to make some fundamental changes, to clear out those things that we've been hiding in our personal storage rooms. Maybe we start out with enthusiasm. We clear everything out; but gradually, before we're done, we put most everything back inside, perhaps in a different order, but probably little more. And there we keep them, until something causes us to open the door and look in; and, when our eyes adjust to the light, the light we've been trying to keep out, we recognize all those things we'd been trying to forget; by keeping them hidden away in the dark.

Each year the Church recalls the story of Christ's Transfiguration on August 6th.

Each year we hear of that moment when the majesty and power and glory of God were revealed to Peter and James and John on the mountain; that moment when the brilliance of God's own nature was revealed in the person of Jesus, the Son of God Incarnate: with Moses and Elijah along side showing how Jesus was the fulfillment of all that God had promised.

It is one of the great stories of affirmation: the voice of the Father saying to the Apostles near the end of Christ's ministry what the voice of Father had said to Christ alone at his beginning: *This is my beloved Son; this is my Son in whom I am well-pleased.*

A word perhaps that they will cling to not so long afterwards when that same Son, that same beloved Son, is arrested and tried and beaten and crucified, when everything they'd ever hoped for suddenly goes wrong; that moment when fear and doubt and despair threaten to overwhelm them.

And perhaps a word that they will cling to many years later, long after the Resurrection, when they too will experience suffering and persecution and even death.

Perhaps in one way, the story of the Transfiguration was for them, and I hope for us, a story that tells us that when things suddenly go sideways; when life gets hard; when the pain gets to be too much; when doubt and fear creep into our hearts, and we begin to imagine that there is no hope, perhaps we hear the voice of the Father: the voice that reminds us that we are beloved; that in Jesus Christ we are not forgotten; that in Christ we always have hope.

But the annual commemoration of the Transfiguration also reminds me that there are parts of my life, and maybe yours as well, that need to be transformed; parts that need to be transfigured; parts that need to be re-shaped and renewed.

Parts that we can only see clearly, as they really are rather than how we imagine them to be, when we let the light shine into all the corners of our hearts.

Perhaps the story of Christ's Transfiguration reminds us that there are some things that need to be discarded; and some things that need to be replaced; and some things that need to be repaired; and that just stuffing things away in the dark, in some corner of our souls where no one else will ever see them, will never change some of the things that need to be changed.

Only Christ can do that; and that will only happen when we're willing to open the door of honesty and truth and forgiveness and let the light shine in.