

March 16, 2025

From the Desk of Fr. Jerry

Dear Friends,

A trajectory is the path set by an object moving through space. Think of a rocket. There is a starting point that has been left behind. There is a destination not yet reached – the moon, the stars, the far reaches of planets. At any given moment, the object in space is somewhere in between its origin and its destiny. Scientists try to find out where the object is on its trajectory.

Similarly, our lives follow a trajectory. Our origin is in God. Our destiny is to be with God forever. It is a daily challenge to consider where we are at in relation to our origin and eternal destiny, where we are at in our trajectory toward God.

The transfiguration story comes somewhere in between Jesus' birth at Bethlehem and his return to the Father at Ascension. Luke's account of the Transfiguration is unique in that it tells us that the three figures were talking about the Exodus. "And, behold, two men were conversing with Jesus, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem."

From the moment that Moses encountered the bush that was burning but not consumed, he followed a different path. When he listened to the voice that was like a gentle breeze, Elijah, he persevered on his prophetic path. Moses certainly would have known about Exodus. It meant that he led folks out of harsh slavery in Egypt. But that was in the past. The Gospel text says that Exodus was something Jesus was going to accomplish. Jesus' Exodus was his death and resurrection at Jerusalem. This was Jesus' going forth from this world to the next.

I think we tend to separate this life from the next. We hope that when this life ends, life will continue, that we will be with God and with those we love. We hope that when this life ends, the next life will begin. We are so consumed by the demands of this world that the eternal destiny, hidden in the present moment, is hard to see.

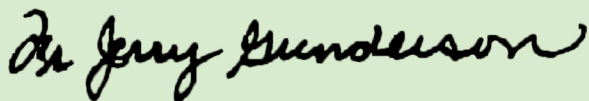
It took a mountaintop setting, radiant light, and very historical men to cue Peter, John, and James that something glorious was hidden in their encounter with Jesus. Perhaps they were hoping for a more dramatic sign from heaven that Jesus was the one they had been waiting for, that Jesus was the one they sought.

The apostles woke up to a vision in which past and future were reflected in the momentary present. A hallmark of Christian thought is the idea that what was, is now, and what will be is also remarkably at hand. The past and the future are simply expressions of the eternal now of the realm of God and God's coming kingdom has already arrived.

The apostles were asleep but awoke just before the vision ended. We too need to be reawakened to God's glory present in our daily lives. Rituals and devotions like the Mass and the rosary can help awaken us to the presence of God wherever we are at in our life journey. But God's self-revelation is not limited to the rituals in which we engage. Although we ritualize our relationship with God in religious settings, God is always walking with us on our journey.

We can be gazing up at the stars of the sky or looking into the eyes of a loved one. We might be occupied in prayer or even engaged in doing the laundry. Jesus comes again in glory! But not only at the end of time. It happens now! The resurrection of Jesus has already occurred. It has an impact on our daily lives. It is not only about our eternal destiny, but it is also about how we want to live now.

We would do well to think of our lives as being on a trajectory. The path we are meant to follow has been set by Jesus' death and resurrection. We too are meant to experience an Exodus – going forth to our promised land. Our future destiny is to be with God who is already here and now and calling us forward to our eternal home.



Fr. Jerry Gunderson