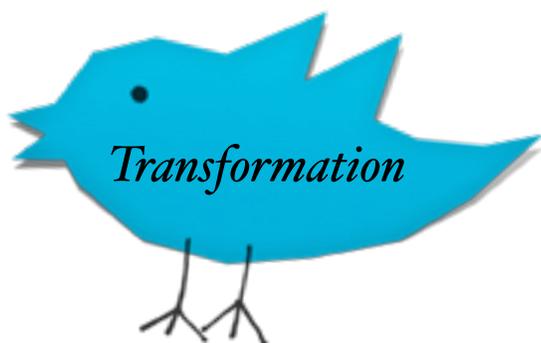




ordinary
time



lectionary
reading

Cycle A

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 67

Reading I: Isaiah 8:23-9:3

This particular section of the prophet Isaiah is referred to as an “oracle,” a proclamation of a future birth. In this case it is the promise of the birth of a new age and a new ruler. A **transformation** is going to occur, most importantly there will be peace, something that has not been known and something that has been longed for. If the reading were to continue on to verse 6 of Chapter 9 we would hear the names given to this new ruler--- Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. The **transformation** would be from darkness to light, despair to hope, ultimately all the negations of goodness would be turned around and **transformed** to their polar opposites of good.

Reading 2: I Corinthians 1;10-13,17

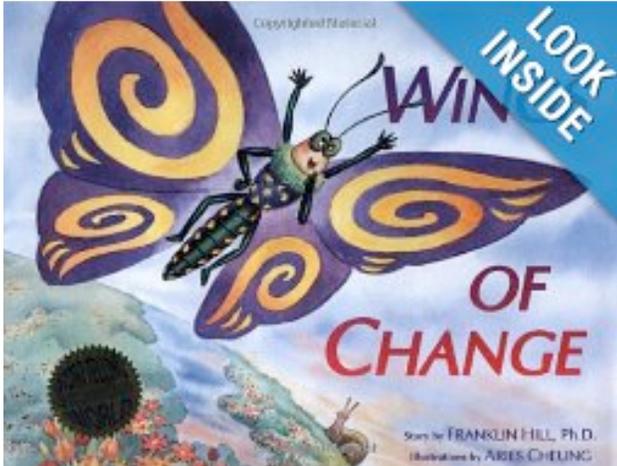
As you may recall from last week’s second reading, the passage from 1 Corinthians 1:1-3, Saint Paul was just beginning his attempt to seek the **transformation** of a divided community. Saint Paul’s pleas for an end to the divisions among the factions of the Corinthian community is made in the name of Jesus Christ. Saint Paul is addressing the fact that the various factions are focused on who brought the people of Corinth to the faith and not on the one to whom their faith is to be directed, namely Jesus Christ. **Transformation** here, and in all Christian communities, can only occur if the focus of each individually and collectively is on Jesus Christ and no other person or entity.

Gospel: Matthew 4: 12-23

Transformation is the theme, yet again, as we look at the words and movement of Jesus in today’s gospel selection. Jesus is inviting people to move from darkness to light. Jesus identifies with the servant, Isaiah in calling the people out of their gloom, and is in fact in the land of Zebulun and Naphtali. The preaching of Jesus, the prophets of old and the present day prophets, if authentic, call and lead people to understand that **transformation** of heart and mind is what our God seeks in each person and community.



children's
story



Wings of Change

Written by Franklin Hill

Illustrated by Aries Cheung

Copyright 2000 Illumination Arts Publishing

ISBN-10: 093569918X

ISBN-13: 978-0935699180



character
education
activity

**God seeks transformation in
the life of each of us, a freely
chosen change of heart, mind
and way of life.**

Wings of Change

Wings of Change is the story of Anew, a contented little caterpillar who fears becoming a butterfly. The fear is like a darkness or gloom that seems to interrupt any type of growth and development. After Anew experiences a number of very puzzling dreams, he turns to a wise old snail by the name of Faith, for advice. She gently explains, *As the world turns, so do you. When you change for good, you change the world too.* This wonderful story follows Anew as he gradually sheds his fears and moves forward courageously to seek his destiny. Change is a very worrisome thing for most people and fear of change can paralyze anyone from moving forward. Time and again Jesus will say to all *Fear is useless, what is needed is trust.* It is trust in Jesus that will allow **transformation** to occur in our lives.

Recall some past experiences where you were afraid and how you overcame the fear by moving forward. It might have been your first day at school, wondering whether you would make any friends or if you would be able to be away from your previous familiar surroundings. One of the ways we can move forward and allow new places and experiences to help us is to recall that we have already gone through things that we were fearful of in the past. Like the caterpillar, Anew, we have to let go of our fears and enter into the new experiences to which God is calling us.

Activity

Step One: The *Wings of Change* offers an Interactive Guide for Exploring the Topic of Change. This would serve as an excellent activity for a beginning.

Step Two: Using the same style of questions provided by the book, reframe the questions in such a way that they may be used to assist the students to see their faith life as a **transformation**, thus providing the students with an opportunity to see that their faith life and their relationship with God is something that is on-going and active.

Just as the caterpillar struggles to break out of its cocoon we struggle to grow into the people that God calls us to be. The labor and the struggle are worth it in the end.



case study

**Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.**

What could you do today?

Look at the 10 Commandments and pick one that you seem to have the most difficulty in observing. See that particular challenge as a cocoon that is wrapped around you and seek the wisdom of someone you trust in ways that would help you break out of that cocoon. Imagine yourself in a cocoon and the difficulty or temptation that is most bothersome to you has you wrapped up in it. What things will you do to help yourself bust out of the cocoon to be the beautiful new creation God intends you to be?

Look Feel Know Act

Look into a full length mirror and see the reflection of yourself as made in *the image and likeness of God*. See that God has made you uniquely to be who you are and has given you great abilities to do something great with your life. Always involve God in the plan for your life for God will always see to your greatest good.

Each time you wish to make a decision place it before God much like you are placing yourself before the mirror. Pray for God's guidance in every major decision. You can see that Jesus did this throughout the gospels in various situations. Jesus often goes to a private place to enter into prayer with the Father before making any major decision or movement in his life. We need to do the same.

In *Wings of Change*, complexity and fear evolves out of changes swirling around the main character, much like any change that faces each person in life. Reframing and helping people, especially children to reframe early in life will help them see change as an opportunity to grow and, if you will, spread their wings to fly into new adventures and to keep aloft their spiritual life with God, seeing God the Father as the one who gave them life, seeing Jesus as their friend knowing personally what it is to be human and the Holy Spirit as their invisible friend that lives within them.

Pray that you will always be open to the movement of God in your life. Know that in your prayer it is God alone that is always trustworthy and will see you through any difficulty or change in your life. Make your mantra prayer one that speaks over and over again: *Almighty I trust that you will always see to my greatest good and that alone is enough for me.*



**closing
tool**



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