

2nd Sunday in Lent (B)

03/01/2015

Each **Sunday** night (when I was young) the **Wonderful World of Disney** would be aired. One episode told the story of **Rip Van Winkle**. It is a story - if you don't recall - about a man who falls asleep in a quiet spot on the banks of the **Hudson River** and he doesn't wake for twenty years.

When he goes to sleep, the sign above his favorite tavern reads: '**King George III, King of England.**' That is, he is a subject of the **British crown**. When he wakes, **King George** is replaced by **George Washington** and he is an **American** citizen. The **tragic** part is that he sleeps through a **revolution**. While he snores, **oblivious** to his surroundings, **fantastic, earth-shaking** events take place.

This happens - with no **ill-intent** - to many of us. We have been trained from an early age that we are **not to concern** ourselves with **matters of faith**. Those are the concerns of **bishops, priests, and religious**. We are simply expected - to put it crudely - to **pray, pay and obey**. It is little wonder that many parishioners, for example, take **little or no interest** in their **personal growth and development (transformation)**, or the **growth and development** of their **parish**. *It isn't their responsibility.*

Many of us as a result, like the **disciples** in today's gospel story from **Mark**, tend to **sleep as the revolution or transformation** occurs. We **substitute** other matters in which **we feel as though we have a say** - such as **business and politics**,

sports and our opinions - and have - by in large - become **oblivious that transformation - a transfiguration** - can happen to us **personally** and to us as a **parish**.

We cannot **cause transformation - transfiguration** - to happen to us or our parish. We can, however, **practice** being **available** when it happens. Our form of **practice** happens on many layers, **each of which as important as the other**. One **practice** is to daily take a personal time of **silence**, in which we **resist** turning on the radio or TV or iPod or smartphone for **fifteen** or **thirty** minutes. It could be, for example, with our first cup of coffee (if we drink coffee).

The **disciples of Jesus practice a willingness to grow and develop...** usually by making **mistakes**. We too can **practice** giving ourselves **permission** to make **mistakes**. This always involves a **willingness** to **trust** ourselves, and a **willingness** to **observe** ourselves - instead of **judging** ourselves - with **compassion** when we **impatiently** scold others for the **mistakes** that they make.

These two **practices** (and others that haven't been identified) can help us **practice** being available to God transforming our lives, and with us our parish.