



Father Danny Murphy is a retired Pastor from Brooklyn NY. A gifted man with a God given talent to inspire and God's gift to us at Holy Cross Church in Vero Beach Florida. This is just another one of his inspirational homilies.

Fr. Danny Murphy – Second Sunday of Lent – 2017

Patience is a virtue, right? Well...I am now going to afford you an opportunity to practice the virtue of patience, because the joke that I am about to tell you, I know that I have told you at least twice before. And you might have heard this joke long before I told it to you. This one has been making the rounds – but this is the only time of the year when you can tell this joke, so here goes. It's the story about this Irishman who every night, on his way home from work, would stop by the pub and order three pints of Guinness. Well this went on, month after month, until one night the bartender says to him: "Seamus, instead of ordering your three pints of Guinness together, why don't I bring you your first pint, and when you finish that, I'll bring you your second, and when you finish that, I'll bring you your third?" "Oh no," says Seamus, "I have to have them all together because when I left Ireland, I promised my two brothers that I would have a drink with them every night!" Well,

one night, Seamus comes into the pub and he orders only two pints. The bartender gently consoles him saying, "Seamus, I'm so sorry about your trouble!" Seamus answers, "What trouble?" The bartender responds, "Well, because you ordered two pints instead of your usual three pints must mean that one of your brothers in Ireland has died!" "Not at all," Seamus replies, "But it's lent, and I gave up drinking for Lent but my two brothers didn't!" Well, that's the third time I told it to you, Dan, do you think we should put it in the closet? (No, keep telling it!) Well, once a year I can keep trying your patience. We'd better get going into the homily!! And as a matter of fact, technically this is not going to be a homily and I'll tell you why. By definition a homily is a reflection on the scriptures that were just proclaimed. Today, we are going to reflect on Transfiguration, but not on the story of the Transfiguration of today's Gospel. Rather, I'm going to share with you transfiguration experiences when I was helping out at Transfiguration parish during the summers when I was in the seminary. My hope is that by my sharing my experiences maybe, please God, you will experience transfiguration in your life as well. The priest of the parish got up each morning at 4:00 a.m. He would then go to chapel, spend an hour or so in prayer, then go back to sleep and get up in time for morning Mass. He did that every day. So when I asked him: "Why are you getting up at 4:00 a.m. in the morning, why don't you say your prayers later in the day." He replied. "Well, I tried that, and it just doesn't work. I get too busy with other things, but if I get up at 4:00 a.m., it assures me that I can spend some quality time in prayer every day." What about us? Do I spend some quality time in prayer every day? Don't

have to get up at 4:00 a.m. God doesn't have to be first in our day, but I think, God has to be first in our order of importance. Scripture tells us: Seek you first the kingdom of God and then all other things follow – God comes first, maybe not chronologically, but in importance. To live like that can be a transfiguring experience! Now for two horrific stories, and unfortunately they are both true. First, we were involved in the Fresh Air Fund. This was a program that would send underprivileged inner-city children to a farm for two weeks during the summer where they could experience some fun and some fresh air. Every Sunday night we would go to Grand Central Terminal to make sure that each returning child was picked up by a parent or guardian. One Sunday night a little boy was not picked up. He was eight years old. After waiting at Grand Central for several hours, and after repeatedly calling his parents but getting no answer, we took the little guy home only to discover that his family had moved and left no forwarding address. They had abandoned him – they took advantage of the two weeks when they knew he would be away to clear out and leave him behind. We took the poor little guy to the local police precinct and they contacted all kinds of social service agencies and eventually had the little boy placed. Well, I don't know whatever happened to that poor young kid, but I wouldn't be a bit surprised if he quit school early, got involved in drugs or alcohol, if he were in jail. Nor would I be a bit surprised if he were dead. When I compare my childhood to his childhood, I realized that there IS no comparison and then I realized that I don't know the childhood nor the adult years of other people, I don't know what they have been through. What abuses that they

might have suffered. So by the grace of God I need to try very hard not to judge them! The other horrific story that occurred during that summer at Transfiguration parish concerns a pretty and perky girl who was repeatedly violated by her uncle. She became pregnant and at thirteen she became a mother of a baby whose father was her uncle. In the midst of all of that evil, I had a transfiguring experience when I realized that no matter what we do, we are always God's beloved child. That was amazing to me. The monstrous things that the parents who abandoned their son and the uncle who violated his niece – even they are always God's beloved child. It blew me away, this is you, O God? That for me was a transfiguring experience. Well not only do I not know what happened to that poor little boy, nor what happened to that teenage girl, I also don't know what happened to any of the people whom I tried to serve during that summer at Transfiguration parish. I only hope that I tried to do my best. Isn't that the story of life for all of us? Isn't it true that in your life, certainly in mine, that people come into and out of your life – in school, at work in the neighborhood, in the parish? People, for the most part, come in and out of our lives. So, if I can try to do the best that I can, when I can where I am and try to Bloom where you are planted. Of all the parables that Jesus preached, my favorite is the parable of the Sower and the Seed. Remember that? It is when Jesus tells us to go out and sow seeds of goodness – scatter them all over the place. And he tells us that most of the seeds of goodness that we sow won't do any good. But some will, some will produce thirty, sixty a hundred fold! We never know, all we have to do is sow! And Jesus concludes my favorite parable by telling us

that after you sow seeds of goodness, your job is done! He literally says, and you can look this up, he literally says that after you sow – “Go to sleep! I’ll take care of the rest!” To try to always do your best and then to always leave the rest – can be a transfiguring experience!