

Transfiguration. What a word that is! According to my computer's dictionary; transfiguration is a dramatic change in appearance, especially one that reveals great beauty, spirituality, or magnificence. Of course this is why the New Testament verse read today is called the Transfiguration of Jesus, because Jesus changed to reveal great beauty when he "shines like the sun", God reveals his spirituality, and Jesus becomes so magnificent that his chosen disciples could not even look upon him. It's a wonderful moment, and a wonderful idea. To be completely transformed into a beautiful, and spiritual creature. Wouldn't you love for that to happen to you? What if I told you that it was possible to have such an experience? Now the "good Christian" in all of us would say, "Of course you can Amanda! How silly you are! This transformation happens when we believe that Jesus is our Lord and savior, we accept the guidance of the Holy Spirit and we love our God Almighty with all of our hearts!" And that's true! That's the wonderful thing about what we believe! However, I know there are many times when I just don't feel all that "transfigured."

As any feeble human being, my mind runs in circles about how to define my "Transfiguration." In today's world beauty is defined by appearance, and usually a thin, sexual one at that. I have never been thin, in fact I've been overweight most of my life and I often joke with my friends that I wouldn't know how to flirt even if you handed me an instructional DVD Set and a guy to practice on. So I guess beauty is out of the question, but what about magnificence? Oh sure, I can feel pretty good about myself sometimes but then I stutter when trying to tell a joke, or I fall down the stairs or trip on the sidewalk, or stick my left foot where my right foot should have been and my right foot where my left foot should have been. Defiantly not qualities of magnificence. Then my only hope with this whole transfiguration thing is spirituality, well I go to church every Sunday....and that's about it... I know I forget to pray all the time and I realized

when writing this sermon that I barely study my bible now, not to mention how I sometimes treat that resident in 236A.... and on and on and on my thoughts go until I am pretty much convinced my transfiguration was only in my imagination. It's a pretty depressing place and I'm sure many of you have felt that way before too. Where it's hard to see the light and see our own beauty, magnificence, and spirituality.

Now I'll admit that I don't struggle with this as much anymore as I did back when I was younger and when I was younger, this mental struggle won every night. Kids are mean and their teasing about the qualities I mentioned earlier such as stuttering and being overweight seemed constant. Every day school was a struggle. This led to suicidal thoughts and one day almost acting upon those thoughts. I feel as though I was saved from doing such a thing by God Himself and this was my transfiguration moment and a major moment of my faith. One night I was crying alone in my room like I did most nights thinking to myself why go on? I can't speak properly, im ugly, no one at school likes me, and as I was weeping I felt two giant arms wrap around me as though God was saying "be of good courage and Know that you are loved." And that was a wonderful moment but going back to school the next day made me forget a little more each day. Life was still a struggle. But the one thing that always kept me going was summer. Not only because I didn't have to go to school and the only person teasing me was my brother (and that was ok because tattling was a wonderful thing back then), but because of Camp. Because of that wonderful little place on a hill, that changed my life, called Kirkmont Center.

Kirkmont was that one place that felt like a home away from home I couldn't wait to go to camp every summer. It was the one place where I was able to have my Transfiguration moment on a hill every summer, and that's because every part of transfiguration just...fit into place perfectly.

It was the best feeling to drive up the long loopy hill to the camp grounds and see the giant Kirkmont sign. And then to see the giant cross set at the top of the second highest point in Ohio. It felt so calming to check in and settle down into my own little bunk in my cabent for the week. To sing songs, laugh, play, climb walls, pray, eat, and worship. I never felt ugly at camp in any way shape or form, at camp everyone accepts everyone who they truly are, it happened to me all the time. My stutter meant nothing, people were patient when I tried to explain something and we spent a lot of time singing. And no one cared how I looked. We all ran around in the mud and figured swimming counted as showers anyway and eu de bugspray and sunscreen was the chosen perfume. My spirituality was never in better shape than when I was at camp. I always felt close to God surrounded by nature and the daily bible studies and vespers always filled my soul and made it soar. And there is just something about seeing the moon and the stars and listening to the frogs croak and crickets chirp while worshipping God that feels so right. And Magnificence just came with the whole package I guess. To come to a place where you feel so right with God, yourself, and your neighbors not having a care in the world is truly magnificent. It kept me coming back every year until I was a senior and working on summer staff as a college student and directing art and discovery camp this summer in the hope others can have the same experiences I have.

Working on summer staff has not only allowed me to experience Kirkmont for entire summers but it has also allowed me to see camp from an outsiders point of view and I am happy to report that campers have the same feelings about camp that I had as a camper myself. I don't know how many times I have seen new campers come to the camp for the first time and even though most return campers already have camp friends they talk to the new campers seem to be surrounded by the old greeting them and letting them know about Kirkmont and all of the fun

they will be having at that camp. I've seen campers cry at devotionals, and seek the help and love of God. I've been told by my own friends and other campers that I may not like them if I saw them at high school, that camp lets them release any idea of popularity stereotypes and just be who they really are. Every Camper gets a chance to give a little speech to the camp on their last night as an "official" camper, and I have heard countless stories like mine in which Kirkmont is the true mountain top experience, the one place that kept them on earth and gave them the heart to go on with life, with love, with any struggles they may have had. Through the highs and the lows of life Kirkmont, was the one place where they were able to have that Transfiguration experience and feel truly transfigured in every way. And it is the one place where we all had the opportunity to be who we truly are! And I've never meet a senior camper who didn't feel the true sadness from the realization that they could never be a camper again.

Of course camp must end every week, tearful good-byes are given, numbers exchanged, last minute socks, shirts, and *gasp* underwear found and packed away. Campers get in the car and get a last look at the cross on the hill as they or their parents drive away and then the last thing campers see before the road out is a plain brown sign with regular white writing, but this sign is one of the main pieces of Kirkmont as well, this sign gives Kirkmont's reminder to all who leave there: "Be of good courage and know that you are loved". A simple message that has a profound effect on all who leave, and one that I try to carry with me to remember my own transfiguration. Because you see what I find as the coolest part of Jesus' transfiguration Is not that Moses and Elijah were there, although they are pretty amazing figures, it's not that Jesus turned into a second "sun" and shone everywhere, no. It's the fact that God came down and said "This is my son, Whom I love and with whom am well pleased". It didn't matter what anyone else thought, Jesus' transformation came from God on a hill, where God showed his love. My Transfiguration

came from God on a Hill at Kirkmont, many, many campers before and after me got their Transfigurations from God, on a Hill at Kirkmont. God shouts to us there “This is my daughter, Amanda, Whom I love and am well pleased!” “These are my sons and daughters at Kirkmont whom I love and with whom I am well pleased!” And that sign “Be of good courage and Know that you are loved” is the perfect reminder to remember our transfiguration and know we are truly transformed and so we can take that message home and when those doubts are swirling in my mind and when the doubts are fogging your mind and body, and spirit as well feel free to shout: “I am God’s Child! He loves me and is pleased with me!

If you can, go to Kirkmont, it’s a wonderful mountain top experience of transfiguration where the people are loving, kind, and accepting. It’s a great reminder of our transfiguration, and just a wonderful place to be to have fun in Gods presence. But if you take anything from my message today don’t let it just be how wonderful Kirkmont is, and that I really really really think you and your children or grandchildren should go ☺, you should pull from this how wonderful God can be! Our transfigurations are complete in Him and only Him whether you are standing on a hill, or lying alone in your bedroom! So be of good courage, and know that you, yes YOU are loved.

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.win2pdf.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.
This page will not be added after purchasing Win2PDF.