

Second Sunday of Lent- March 5 2023

Acknowledgment of Land, Seas, Skies and Waterways

We acknowledge the First Nations peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We pay our respect to the Elders past and present, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of First Nations peoples across these lands, seas, skies and waterways. We acknowledge the deep spiritual attachment and relationship of First Nations peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

Context - Second Sunday of Lent

In Lent, we undertake a spiritual pilgrimage that invites us to different locations and landmarks on our 40 day journey with Christ. Last week, for the first Sunday of Lent we went into the desert with Jesus. This week, we journey up the mountain with Jesus, Peter, James, and John. Mountains are mentioned frequently in the Bible because they were a dominant feature of the landscape. In addition, they also have important religious symbolism. Firstly, in both Jewish and Christian tradition, mountains symbolise closeness to God; God often reveals himself on a mountain top in scripture. Secondly, mountains represent stability which serves as an important reminder that God is a source of stability in turbulent times. Let us now prepare to journey up the mountain and experience closeness to God through our encounter with the Gospel.

Scripture: Matthew 17: 1-9

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

His face shone like the sun.

¹ Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

² There in their presence he was transfigured: his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as dazzling as light.³ And suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. ⁴ Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Lord,' he said, 'it is wonderful for us to be here; if you want me to, I will make three shelters here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.'⁵ He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and suddenly from the cloud there came a voice which said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.'

⁶ When they heard this, the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear.⁷ But Jesus came up and touched them, saying, 'Stand up, do not be afraid.'⁸ And when they raised their eyes they saw no one but Jesus.

⁹ As they came down from the mountain Jesus gave them this order, 'Tell no one about this vision until the Son of man has risen from the dead.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Reflection by Kirby Will Project Officer Identity and Outreach.

The Transfiguration can be a confusing story when read and considered in isolation. Why are Moses and Elijah there? Why is it only a fleeting moment? Why would Jesus want to keep it a secret? When we consider it as a whole story,



Figure 1 View of Mount Tabor projecting from Jezreel Valley, traditionally believed to be the site of the Transfiguration of Jesus. Lower Galilee, British Mandate of Palestine (Israel), circa 194 Photograph. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica, 25 May 2016.



Transfiguration by James B. Janknegt.

however, there are two key learnings we can take from it.

Firstly, Jesus in all his glory reminds us of our goal and provides us with encouragement for the journey. Life can get rough, and we are faced with difficulties, as Peter will come to know all too well, God reminds us through his Son what lies in store for us when our earthly journey concludes.

The second learning we can take from the Transfiguration is about listening closely to God and taking action as a result of this deep listening. This involves coming down from the mountain just as Jesus, Peter, James, and John did. In his Angelus Address for the second Sunday of Lent in 2014, Pope Francis reminds us that we cannot stay on the mountain, there is a second part to the story. He says:

Transfiguration - I would like to take two significant elements that can be summed up in two words: ascent and descent. We all need to go apart, to ascend the mountain in a space of silence, to find ourselves and better perceive the voice of the Lord. This we do in prayer. But we cannot stay there! Encounter with God in prayer inspires us anew to "descend the mountain" and return to the plain where we meet many brothers weighed down by fatigue, sickness, injustice, ignorance, poverty both material and spiritual. To these brothers in difficulty, we are called to bear the fruit of that experience with God, by sharing the grace we have received.

Our descent and what we do when we are not on the mountain is defined by the words God speaks to Peter. He says: *'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.'* Listening is an intentional activity; it requires paying attention to what is being said or asked of us. When we ascend the mountain in prayer, we need to ensure we are listening and not just hearing out of habit. Often when faced with trials or difficult work, we are quick to seek God or others to ask them to give us what we need, but do we truly listen as part of this process?



Figure 2 Greek orthodox church fresco : Christ after his transfiguration. Photo. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica, 25 May 2016. quest.eb.com/search/300_261658/1/300_261658/cite. Accessed 2 Mar 2023..

Prayer

Lord, be with us always.

When we experience difficult times in our lives,
illuminate the way for us by reminding us of the glory that awaits.

Help us to always listen to you and draw strength from your example so
that we may continue not only on our own journeys, but also light the way for others on their journeys too.

Be with us as we go about our work on the plains,
so that we may continue to be vessels of your grace
as we work towards the betterment of our society and
give us the courage to persevere when the journey gets rough.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Call to Action:

- Have a discussion as a family and identify the graces you have received individually and as a family. Consider how you could share these with others in our society.
- Create a Transfiguration [sun-catcher](#) as a family.
- Use this Loyola Press [resource](#) (click on the Family tab) as a basis for a family reflection.
- Watch Matt Maher's [Second Sunday, Breathing Through Lent](#) and listen to his song [Light the Way](#)

