

Cycle C 2nd Sunday of Lent

Reading 1 GN 15:5-12, 17-18

The Lord God took Abram outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you can. Just so,” he added, “shall your descendants be.” Abram put his faith in the LORD, who credited it to him as an act of righteousness. He then said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as a possession.” “O Lord GOD,” he asked, “how am I to know that I shall possess it?” He answered him, “Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old she-goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” Abram brought him all these, split them in two, and placed each half opposite the other; but the birds he did not cut up. Birds of prey swooped down on the carcasses, but Abram stayed with them. As the sun was about to set, a trance fell upon Abram, and a deep, terrifying darkness enveloped him. When the sun had set and it was dark, there appeared a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch, which passed between those pieces. It was on that occasion that the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the Great River, the Euphrates.”

Responsorial Psalm PS 27:1, 7-8, 8-9, 13-14

R. (1a) The Lord is my light and my salvation.

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear? The LORD is my life's refuge; of whom should I be afraid?

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Hear, O LORD, the sound of my call; have pity on me, and answer me. Of you my heart speaks; you my glance seeks.

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Your presence, O LORD, I seek. Hide not your face from me; do not in anger repel your servant. You are my helper: cast me not off.

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD with courage; be stouthearted, and wait for the LORD.

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Reading 2 PHIL 3:17—4:1

Join with others in being imitators of me, brothers and sisters, and observe those who thus conduct themselves according to the model you have in us. For many, as I have often told you and now tell you even in tears, conduct themselves as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction. Their God is their stomach; their glory is in their “shame.” Their minds are occupied with earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body by the power that enables him also to bring all things into subjection to himself. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord.

Gospel LK 9:28B-36

Jesus took Peter, John, and James and went up the mountain to pray. While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions had been overcome by sleep, but becoming fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As they were about to part from him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” But he did not know what he was saying. While he was still speaking, a cloud came and cast a shadow over them, and they became frightened when they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my chosen Son; listen to him.” After the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. They fell silent and did not at that time tell anyone what they had seen.

The Scriptures on this 2nd Sunday of Lent celebrate that God loves us so much He reveals His divine presence in many ways. We need to open our hearts and see that God brings us salvation through Christ, but we also must be able to recognize the many ways He brings us to encounter the Risen Christ every day. Lent is the time for us to recognize in our ordinary lives how close His relationship is with us, how we should participate in the suffering of Jesus, and as the 2nd readings said, how we must imitate Christ through the examples of others.

In the 1st reading God initiated a covenant, a close and intimate relationship with Abram. He then sealed it with a sacred ritual to make it concrete, to make it official. We have our own Catholic rituals, but we must recognize Jesus' call to enter into His New Covenant many times comes to us in our ordinary events of life. We could be gazing at the night sky, looking into the eyes of a child, or hearing the news. No life is too simple....no life is too busy for God to encounter us.

In the Gospel today Jesus climbed a mountain to encounter God, as both Moses and Elijah had done before. While in prayer God's glory was revealed...Jesus was transfigured both from the inside (His face had changed) and on the outside (His clothing dazzled). He spoke with Moses and Elijah about His coming exodus in Jerusalem. His exodus...His "going out from," was not being treated as a tragic mistake to be avoided, but as an important part of God's salvation plan which included Jesus' suffering, death, resurrection and ascension. His closest disciples, Peter, James and John recognized the glorified Jesus. I remember my Scripture Studies teacher in Deacon Formation said that when PJ&J were with Jesus something very important always happened. Here, they were all taken into the cloud...a symbol of the hidden God...and a voice proclaimed Jesus' divine identity. But then, it was only after the actual events of Jesus's exodus, His suffering, death and resurrection, had occurred that they understand what happened on that mountain, and were finally be prepared to proclaim the Good News fearlessly.

Like the disciples, we may want to share in Christ's glory, but we can only do so by sharing in His suffering. Lent is the perfect time to enter into His suffering not merely by giving up something, but by sharing in the suffering of the Body of Christ. This Lent we see suffering has continued with the war in Ukraine for 3 years now...we see it in the trauma of children who

have been deprived of an innocent childhood...suffering in parents who must raise their kids in the midst of violence and hunger and pain...in the empty eyes of the aged who often forget and too often themselves are forgotten. We pray that the glory of God can somehow be part of these people's lives. What else can we do beyond charity?

We can imitate people who make the lives of others much better...Over the past 3 years many countries welcomed over 6.8 millions refugees from Ukraine, including the US who admitted 270,000...many of whom came to Atlanta. Their integrity somehow strengthens us. Their compassion inspires us, and we feel God's love. Their endurance gives us confidence, and we understand God's mercy...How can we share in their suffering?

I remember one of my trips to Haiti when we went to the nutrition clinic that Mother Teresa's Sisters of Charity run in the town of Hinche caring for over 100 children at a time. When desperate parents can no longer feed their children, they drop them off there. It is a place where we can go to see God's glory and share in someone's suffering. I saw someone scoop-up a youngster no more than 2 years old...and then be told to put him down because he may have the contagious scabies itch mites. Others in our group fed the babies laying in their little cribs...I couldn't do it myself...some were listless and puffed up from malnutrition...one with his head swollen from hydroencephalitis whimpered in his crib....but, most of the 30 or so babies in the room quietly looked at us with their big round eyes...none were smiling. I am still in awe of the good sisters and the grace of their Mother Superior...going there to meet the babies was a good step forward...how can we imitate their care of the poor?

Maybe it is easier for us to see God's glory revealed through the suffering of others...but, Lent is also the time for us to step back to look and realize that we ourselves may be carrying a heavy burden that only Jesus can heal. How blessed we are to be in the caring community of St. Andrew...to be able to easily reach out for someone to listen and share our journey.

God is revealed in very ordinary ways....ways in which He is present...ways which lead to our salvation through Christ. Lent is the time for us to open our hearts and see the many ways we encounter the Risen Christ in our lives....by recognizing the glory of God around us...and yes, by even sharing in suffering of others. When we do, our lives will be changed forever!