

Cycle A 2nd Sunday of Lent

Reading 1, [Gn 12:1-4a](#)

The LORD said to Abram: “Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father’s house to a land that I will show you. “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you.” Abram went as the LORD directed him.

Responsorial Psalm, [Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22](#)

R. (22) Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Upright is the word of the LORD, and all his works are trustworthy. He loves justice and right; of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him, upon those who hope for his kindness, To deliver them from death and preserve them in spite of famine.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Our soul waits for the LORD, who is our help and our shield. May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us who have put our hope in you.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Reading II, [2 Tm 1:8b-10](#)

Beloved: Bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God. He saved us and called us to a holy life, not according to our works but according to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began, but now made manifest through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Gospel, [Mt 17:1-9](#)

Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and do not be afraid.” And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone. As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, “Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

Have you ever experienced something that was right before your eyes, but it took something or someone to bring it in focus for you? I recently had such an experience in San Francisco at Christmas when I baptized my 1st grandchild, Damiano. After the Baptism, one of my Son's friends came out of the church gift shop with a cross of St. Damiano to give my grandson. It was the cross that St Francis was praying before when God called him to rebuild the chapel of San Damiano, and prompted him to give up his inheritance and devote his life to God. I immediately recognized it...it struck me that I saw that cross nearly every Sunday for the last 5 or 6 years. You see, it is the cross that Father Bob Cushing gave St Brendans and it hangs on the back wall of our sanctuary. I didn't think I ever heard the name Damiano until my grandson was born, but I had to smile to recognize that Damiano had been with me for years...right before my eyes....and, that I now have a powerful and holy reminder of my Damiano. Trust me, there are no coincidences, only God's blessings.

The reality of the Scriptures this Sunday is that God loves us so much that he blesses our lives in countless ways, not because we deserve or have earned it, but because His grace is without bounds. All we have to do is be open to receive His blessing....when we do, we enter into a new beginning.

As I was reflecting on the readings today, I couldn't help but think that the Gospel mirrors what our Lenten journey should be. The disciples Peter, James & John knew Jesus, but couldn't fully grasp who He really was. Sometimes I think we find ourselves in that situation. We know Jesus in our intellect, but we need an experience of what I call Jesus-in-the-moment to better understand Him in our hearts. We need Lenten experiences to open us up and refresh our faith so we can more fully grasp who Jesus really is.

Leading up to today's Gospel, Matthew had taken 16 chapters to narrate how Jesus gradually taught the Disciples about Himself. In Chapter 16, Jesus had inched them along until Peter was able to say, under pressure, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*" They finally got it! Jesus then felt safe to tell them for the very first time that "*He must go*

to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised.” If you remember, Peter vehemently objected. He took Jesus aside *“and began to rebuke him, God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you.”* He didn’t get it. Jesus had to set him straight, but He didn’t stop blessing Peter. In Chapter 17, the Transfiguration was a way for Jesus to show that his sacrifice would not contradict his divinity. It was a powerful way to open the Disciples hearts to know who He really was.

While we probably won’t have an experience like Peter, James and John did, nevertheless we can have some powerful experiences in own Lenten journeys that will open our hearts. We need to have some Jesus-in-the-moment experiences to take us out of our spiritual comfort zone. It could be as simple as discussing a Lenten reflections booklet and sharing our faith among our family around the dinner table. Or, joining the Men’s Group or the ladies at Voyagers on Friday mornings, or at the Parish retreat, to share faith among friends. Telling a friend in need that we will dedicate our prayers to them this week. Going to Reconciliation. Like the Disciples who came to understand when they saw the Transfigured Jesus, in Lent our faith needs to be stirred, and maybe even shaken, so we can recognize that the Risen Christ is all around us.

Lent is a time to listen to Jesus and enter a new beginning. *He destroyed death, and brought life and immortality... He calls us to repentance and a change of heart.* It is a time to act on God’s Word about loving our enemies and being peacemakers.... to walk into Church recognizing the people here are the Body of Christ....to eagerly listen to the Word made flesh *“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him.”*.....to approach in awe as we come to receive the Holy Eucharist...and, to leave here better understanding that *He has saved us and has called us to a holy life.*

Lent is a time to recognize that God’s abundant blessing in our lives are right before our eyes inviting us to enter into a new beginning. May we come to fully appreciate that the ultimate blessing of God is Jesus Himself.