

2nd Sunday of Lent C/2013

The readings of this second Sunday of Lent talk about the importance of conversing with God and the transformation it brings into our life.

The first reading recalls the conversation God had with Abram. It shows the promise God made to give him the heritage of numerous descendants and a rich land. It shows equally how God credited Abram as a righteous man because of his faith. Then, the text describes the way God made the covenant with Abram through the sacrifice of animals that he offered to God.

What is behind this text is the idea that God is capable of entering a relationship with human beings by making a covenant with them. In this relationship, he precedes them, because the initiative of covenant comes from him. That is why he is able to bless them with abundance of gifts, including eternal life.

This text allows us to understand what is at stake in today's Gospel as Jesus is transfigured on the mountain. First of all, the Gospel says that Jesus took three of his disciples, namely Peter, John and James, and went up the mountain to pray.

While he was there, he was transfigured and Moses and Elijah were conversing with him. Peter and his companions, taken by sleep, did not realize what was happening until they were fully awake. Overwhelmed by the spectacle, Peter expressed to Jesus his joy to be there and proposed to erect three tents, namely one for Jesus, one for Moses and another for Elijah.

As he was still speaking, a cloud covered them and they were all frightened. Then, a voice came from the cloud declaring that Jesus was his chosen son and they had to listen to him. In the end, Jesus was found alone and the three friends fell silent about this event and did not tell anyone at that time.

What do we learn from this Gospel? The first thing I want to highlight is about the chance of being awake. In today's Gospel, there is an important detail that deserves our attention, namely that Peter and his companions have been overcome with sleep, but when they became fully awake, they saw Jesus' glory and the two men standing with him.

In fact, we miss a lot of things in life when our mind is asleep. I am not saying that we are blind and we cannot see. I am not saying that most of the time we sleep instead of being awake. What I say is that, in spite of our widely open eyes, it can happen that we do not see. In spite of being physically present and alive, it can happen that we are mentally and spiritually asleep. When that is the case, many things can happen around us, but we do not see them and we do not realize, because we do not have the focus of the reality of faith.

For instance, when we dwell in prejudices, it can happen that our minds are shut down. In that perspective, someone might talk about something important, but because our mind is shut, what he says does not mean a lot to us. We are, then, like sleepers who cannot awake.

The same is true about the fear of newness or change. Such fear can be so intense that we feel paralyzed at the simple idea that our routine will be disturbed by something new

coming into our life. In that perspective, it means that people have become accustomed to their life style to the point that they have become asleep and cannot awaken.

With regard to this reality of sleep, Lent is an invitation that we stay awake, because it is only when we are awake that we can realize what we really need in order to change and to follow Jesus up the mountain. Like the disciples, we really need to be awake so that we may see what is going on in our life and around us. If we are distracted and asleep, Lent will bring nothing into our life. One of the things that can help us to stay awake in this time of Lent is prayer.

The second thing we learn from today's Gospel is that there is a light beyond the tunnel. Once again, there is this detail that is worth noticing, namely that Moses and Elijah were talking to Jesus about the exodus he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem. What is that? It is about his passion and death on the cross in Jerusalem.

The passion and death of Jesus are an event that will shock deeply the disciples. Not only would they not like to hear such a thing, but they would also not like it to happen at all. That is why when Jesus spoke of his passion, they were almost scandalized.

In that perspective, in taking the three disciples with him up the mountain, Jesus wants them to be the witnesses of his transformation and realize that he is destined to glory. Even if he has to go through passion and death, that is not the whole meaning of his life. The true meaning of his life is glory, transfiguration and transformation.

The implication to draw from such a perception is quite clear. Although the disciples have also to go through persecution and rejection, they are prepared to sharing in the glory of Jesus that is already anticipated in his transfiguration. Therefore, beyond the tunnel of suffering, pain and disappointment of this world, there is a light.

Remember, brothers and sisters, that those three disciples represent us and the whole Church. What they have witnessed is what we will become in spite of our present state of crisis, pain, suffering and disappointment. The dark moments of our life are transitory and not permanent. One day, we will share in the glory of Christ. It might take time before it comes, but eventually it will come. That day we will see him face to face as we will see the light coming beyond the tunnel.

Let us pray, then, that God may help us to listen to Jesus and to trust him in everything that happens in our life. Let us ask him to give us the courage to support with perseverance and in faith the suffering of the present time with the conviction that we will share in the resurrection of Jesus. May God bless you all!

Genesis 15: 5-12, 17-18; Philippians 3: 17-4: 1; Luke 9: 28b-36



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