

Second Sunday of Lent C/2022

The readings of this second Sunday of Lent talk about the conversation with God and the transformation it brings to the one who speaks with him. They invite us to a continual prayer and conversation with God, from which he pours his blessings upon us.

The first reading recalls the conversation between God and Abram. It shows the promise God made to give him numerous descendants and a rich land. It also shows how God credited Abram as a righteous man because of his faith. In the end, it describes the way God made the covenant with Abram through the sacrifice of animals that were offered to him as holocaust.

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. There is also the idea that God precedes human beings in any relationship he has with them, because the initiative of the covenant comes from him. The last idea is related to the truth that the gifts we enjoy in this world are blessings received from God.

This text allows us to understand the point of 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.

It also shows that while he was still on the top, he was transfigured and Moses and Elijah were conversing with him. Then, it reports how Peter and his companions who were overwhelmed by that scene, wanted to build three tents: one for Jesus, one for Moses and another for Elijah.

After that, the Gospel says that while Jesus was still speaking, a cloud covered them and a voice from heaven recognized him as the chosen son, and the disciples were told to listen to him. The Gospel ends up by showing Jesus alone with the three disciples to whom he imposed silence over his transfiguration.

What do we learn from today's Gospel? Today I want to talk about the conversation that transforms. What do I mean by that? Let me explain by a way of an observation. I asked very recently a couple of people to tell me what they feel when they call their parents. For sure, there were many reasons why people converse with their parents on the phone. But, about the feelings, it turned out that such a conversation was reassuring, calming and uplifting, especially if one had problems or wanted some comfort with regard to the things he was dealing with.

In other words, such a conversation was transforming because one came out of it changed, invigorated, appeased and comforted. Such a conversation is like prayer. Prayer is, in fact, a conversation with God, an open communication with God where we share with him our deepest feelings, but at the end of which we are transformed by his comforting presence.

With all that in mind, we understand that when the Gospel says that Jesus went up the mountain to pray, something would happen to him. And, indeed, it happened: he was transfigured; his face changed, his clothing became dazzling white and he was conversing with Moses and Elijah about the exodus he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem. What was that exodus? It was about his passion and death in Jerusalem.

The passion and death of Jesus, indeed, were an event that would shock deeply the disciples. They would not like to hear such a thing; they would not like it to happen at all.

And yet, there was no other way out of it. It was the fulfillment of the will of the Father. The presence of Moses and Elijah talking to Jesus was a comforting presence about it.

In that perspective, by taking the three disciples with him up the mountain, Jesus wanted them to be the witnesses of his transformation so that they realize that he is destined to glory. Therefore, even if he has to go through passion and death, that was not the whole meaning of his life. In the same way, when the disciples would go through persecution and rejection, they should know that they will share in the glory of Jesus that was already anticipated in his transfiguration. Those three disciples represent us and the whole Church. What they have witnessed is what we will become.

Moreover, the conversation with Moses and Elijah, important figures of Israelite history, aims at showing us that the Law and the Prophets are united in Jesus. For that reason, we have to trust him and accept everything he tells us. He is in the true line with the Law and the prophets; he is the fulfillment of everything they stand for. When we trust him, we are at the right side of history and, therefore, we will have our eternal salvation. If so, what else must we do other than to listen to him?

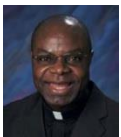
In fact, the voice that came from the cloud said: “This is my chosen Son; listen to him”, Jesus is the beloved Son of the Father. The transfiguration is the revelation of the true identity of Jesus as the Son of God, even if he is not accepted and recognized by all. But we who have accepted him will never be disappointed if we listen to him and do what he recommends us. Once more, the revelation of Jesus as the chosen Son of God says something to us about Lent and the changes we have to bring in our lives according to the words of Jesus.

The scene of the transfiguration teaches us that conversing with God in prayer can change us and our life. It can widen our vision and understanding of the things ongoing in our life and in the world. God’s grace we receive in prayer can enhance our experience of the transcendent by understanding that there is more to life than simply what we can touch and observe with our senses.

The transfiguration of Jesus gives us courage and hope in our dark moments of life. We know by experience that life is not always easy. There are moments of hardships, sufferings and tears. In these moments, we have to raise our eyes above, knowing that the meaning of life is not all consumed in what we go through. There is always a hope because Christ can transform our suffering into joy.

It is that joy that is foreseen in the transfiguration. Let us offer, then, our Lenten sacrifices to the Lord so that through Lenten observances and through the acceptance of our daily crosses, we may become closer to him. We share the mountain-top experience of Peter, John and James when we spend extra time in prayer. Fasting can help our body store up spiritual energy as it elevates us to God. Our almsgiving brings us close to our fellows who have nothing, as we recognize in them the suffering Christ. May God bless you all!

Genesis 15: 5-12, 17-18; Philipians 3: 20-4: 1; Luke 9: 28b-36



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