

Lent is not only a season of sacrifice. It is also a season of revelation. As we continue walking through these forty days, we are reminded that recovery is not sustained by discipline alone. We need hope. We need glimpses of what God is doing beneath the surface. We need moments that remind us why surrender is worth it.

This Sunday's gospel reading brings us to the Transfiguration, a moment of light in the midst of a journey that will soon lead to suffering (Matthew 17:1-5):

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."

The disciples are given a vision of Christ's glory before they descend the mountain and eventually witness his suffering. This pattern mirrors the rhythm of recovery. Many of us can recall early moments of clarity when we first experienced freedom from addiction. There may have been a meeting, a retreat, a confession, or a conversation that felt transformative. Like Peter, we may have thought, "It is good that we are here." We may have wished to freeze that moment and remain in its warmth.

Yet recovery does not unfold on mountaintops alone. The Twelve Steps call us back into ordinary life, where daily surrender replaces dramatic experience. Peter wanted to build tents and preserve the moment. The voice from the cloud redirects him: "Listen to him." The focus is not on capturing the feeling, but on following the Son.

The Transfiguration occurs shortly after Jesus tells his disciples that he must suffer and die. Peter had resisted that idea. He wanted glory without the cross. We often carry the same desire. We want recovery without discomfort, healing without humility, spiritual growth without inconvenience. Yet Jesus makes it clear that discipleship involves denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily.

For those in addiction recovery, this daily cross may look like honesty when secrecy feels safer. It may mean declining invitations that threaten sobriety, making amends that stir up discomfort, or sitting with emotions we once numbed. These acts are rarely dazzling. They are steady and faithful. They form the path down the mountain.

The Transfiguration assures us that suffering is not the end of the story. The light revealed on the mountain points toward the resurrection. When we remain rooted in prayer, fellowship, and the sacramental life of the Church, we are reminded that God is shaping something far greater than we can see in the moment.

Lent trains us not to chase spiritual highs, but to listen. Prayer and meditation help us bend our will toward

God's rather than asking God to bend toward ours. We carry memories of grace with gratitude, but we do not cling to them. Instead, we allow them to strengthen us for the next faithful step.

As we continue through Lent, we ascend the mountain not to escape reality, but to encounter Christ more fully. And when we descend, we do so with renewed trust that the same Lord who dazzles us with light also walks with us through the valley.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Can you recall a mountaintop moment in your recovery that strengthened your faith or hope?
- Where might you be tempted to cling to a past spiritual experience instead of listening to God in the present?
- What does taking up your cross daily look like in your recovery right now?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Genesis 12:1-4

RESP. PS. Psalm 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22

SECOND READING 2 Timothy 1:8b-10

GOSPEL Matthew 17:1-9

