

Second Sunday of Lent



We ascend the mountain of spiritual progress by staying firmly rooted in the Twelve Steps of recovery and the sacramental life of the Church. As we continue through the season of Lent, this Sunday's Gospel reading has us reflecting upon the story of the transfiguration of our Lord. It begins:

*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.*

A *spiritual awakening* is often referenced as a necessary part of finding new life in 12-step recovery. This moment proved to be just that for the disciples who witnessed it. However, it can also remind us that we must continue to follow the direction of Christ and surrender our will to God. Peter and the others were literally asleep but became fully awake to see His glory. Like Peter, John, and James, the glorified nature of Jesus is revealed to us and awakens us from sleep—a biblical metaphor to describe the new life made available through Christ.

Peter petitions Jesus, proclaiming, “Master, it is good that we are here.” He requests that they pitch tents and stay atop the safety of the mountain, although Scripture notes, he “did not know what he was saying.” Luke’s Gospel continues:

*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.”*

We might relate to the experience of Peter who wished to stay in the presence of the fully revealed Christ. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke each precede their accounts of the transfiguration with the story of Peter rebuking Jesus for proclaiming that He must suffer and die. Peter was intent on our Lord’s glory coming without the cost of suffering. Later, Peter would deny knowing Jesus after having been sentenced to death on a cross.

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We may wish for our own spiritual journey to be void of suffering, in which case it is important to recall the words of Jesus: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” Abstaining from lustful behaviors, sexual compulsions, and unhealthy love attachments while denying ourselves of temporary earthly pleasures during Lent keeps us aligned with the will of God.

Fighting to remain in a moment that has passed or looking to replicate a spiritual experience can prevent us from encountering the will of God in the present. We can certainly delight in the past and should carry moments of divine revelation with us, but we must not let that be a barrier to picking up our cross daily. Instead, we can look to our spiritual awakening as an opportunity to envision the resurrection that awaits us after going through inevitable hardships and trials.

Prayer and meditation guide our attitude toward suffering and help us accept our daily cross. We might find ourselves praying for comfort or for God’s will to be bent toward our own. Rather, prayer is a practice of becoming willing to bend our will toward that of the Lord. He will often give us moments of growth and opportunities to trust Him if we are committed to our recovery. At times, He will dazzle us with His grace as we climb the mountain of freedom.

- Recall and share about a spiritual awakening you have had as a result of your recovery.
- How is God asking you to take up your cross today and follow Him?
- How do you measure the progress being made along your spiritual journey?

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18

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

Second Reading: Philippians 3:17–4:1

Gospel: Luke 9:28b-36