

Second Sunday of Lent – Cycle C

Focus: Transfigure your perception, your expression, and your life

<u>First Reading</u>	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>Second Reading</u>	<u>Gospel</u>
GN 15:5-12, 17-18	PS 27:1, 7-8, 8-9, 13-14	PHIL 3:17–4:1	LK 9:28B-36

Today we heard, in each of our readings about specific transfigurations. In our first reading we heard how the sacrificed animals were transfigured into the seal of the first covenant. We are told by St. Paul that Christ will change us to better conform to Christ's body. And of course in our Gospel, high on top of Mount Tabor overlooking the city and beautiful countryside, Christ is transfigured.

But before we jump to the transfiguration, let's spend a little time in the rest of the Gospel. While there are numerous teachings, there are three specific teachings that need to be called out.

The first is that Jesus set out to pray. He is always setting out to pray. Here is the Son of God, full divine yet full human, taking time out of his otherwise very occupied day to pray. This is reminiscent of stories about Pope Saint John Paul II. As busy as he was he always seemed to find the chapels and there he would stay and pray at length. It got to be so bad for his assistance, that they took to misdirecting or even trying to hide the location of the chapels during his travels. But to no avail, these attempts at misdirection were inadequate and as full a calendar as this beloved Saint had, he made time to pray. As C.S. Lewis put it regarding Jesus' need for prayer, Jesus is simply too busy **not** to pray. As C.S. Lewis went on to say, "making one so busy is Satan's single best weapon". You see, when we feel rushed for time, stressed, believing that we always need to be on the go, we may feel that by skipping prayer we somehow gain time. This of course is just the opposite effect. You see prayer is our time with God. It is time for us to speak our needs as well as listen, just as God commanded on Mount Tabor after the transfiguration. While there are many physiological and psychological affects of prayer, central to these are a calming, ordering peace, which in turns rejuvenates our minds and wills to continue to meet all of the challenges. It is no wonder that Lent is a time of prayer.

The second point from today's Gospel was the focus on how Jesus' face was transformed. While there was talk about his clothing becoming dazzling white, let's focus on just His face. Why is this significant or even worth mentioning?

Think about in this way. Have you ever been at the airport to pick someone up, a close friend or relative. As you look upon the passengers who have disembarked the plane at 10PM after what had to be a lengthy day of travel, it is **not** easy to imagine and see their long, tired, somewhat distant faces. However, when your eyes connect with those of your companion's, you both light up the Christmas tree in Rockefeller Center Plaza. Just seeing a friendly, loving and welcoming face changes our whole appearance. Therefore, when in the presence of two of God's most precious prophets, why would not Jesus' face be transformed? Our challenge from this is that we are afforded the same power to transform lives and moods through our loving and welcoming selves illuminated through our facial expressions. Further to the point, when you look at yourself in the mirror, do you see Christ? Do you see His warm loving gaze; his love for all people especially those not part of the main stream, or his desire for peace?

The third point from the transfiguration Gospel was the topic discussed between Jesus, Moses and Elijah. Did you catch it? It was that of Jesus' exodus from Jerusalem. In other words, His resurrection. Unfortunately, this story quickly becomes another temptation story like last week.

You see, last week the temptations were to assess if Jesus' human body could withstand the physical and psychological challenges ahead. This week the temptation was to assess His ability to not be overcome by the very trappings of free will. Because of Peter's offer to pitch three tents, was an attempt to delay or put off the journey to Jerusalem. Peter was offering Jesus an out. He was giving Jesus an opportunity to just stay there and live out His ministry right there. Thankfully, Jesus went on without giving it another thought. For us, this is a lesson of moving forward of resuming our commitment to God's Will. Like Jesus, we have come here to pray and worship God. We have come here to be transfigured and to be transfiguring. Being good and faithful servants, we are now called to leave our comfortable tents of past practices, to continue the journey and the work of Christ, while returning here each week to be fed physically and spiritually.