

2nd Sunday of Lent, Year C

GOSPEL

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Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up the mountain to pray. As he prayed, the aspect of his face was changed and his clothing became brilliant as lightning. Suddenly there were two men there talking to him; they were Moses and Elijah appearing in glory, and they were speaking of his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were heavy with sleep, but they kept awake and saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As these were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He did not know what he was saying. As he spoke, a cloud came and covered them with shadow; and when they went into the cloud the disciples were afraid. And a voice came from the cloud saying, 'This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him.' And after the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. The disciples kept silence and, at that time, told no one what they had seen.

(Luke 9:28–36)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- The event described in this text is traditionally known as 'the transfiguration'. Although the gospels do not mention a specific place, the transfiguration has been associated with Mount Tabor in Galilee since the fourth century.
- Jesus' white robes and changed appearance represent his glory and divinity, which are revealed to the disciples in this text.
- Moses and Elijah are two of the greatest heroes of Israel. They represent the law and the prophets—two of the most important sections of the Hebrew Bible. Like Jesus, both Moses and Elijah suffered rejection during their lives.

EXPLORING THE WORD

Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is a dominant theme in the Gospel of Luke. Just a few verses after this text, Jesus 'resolutely took the road for Jerusalem', and his resolve is foreshadowed in his conversation with Moses and Elijah when they speak of 'his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem'. Jesus not only reveals his true identity to his chosen companions but also his destiny: the 'passing over' of his death and resurrection, by which his divinity will be definitively revealed to all. In fulfilling this destiny, everything that the law (represented by Moses) and the prophets (represented by Elijah) stood for will be accomplished. Peter misunderstands and thinks that the event on the mountain is the end of the story—he wants to erect tents there. He has not yet grasped that the journey to Jerusalem must be continued. As Christians, we cannot simply remain on the mountain and contemplate divinity; we must also come down the mountain and follow the earthly road of living faith to its conclusion.

- This gospel emphasises the need to withdraw for prayer. How important are quiet contemplation and prayer in your journey?
- How do you balance prayer and action as you live your faith?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- 'Master, it is wonderful for us to be here.' Reflect on what these words mean for you as you approach the sacraments.
- 'Listen to him.' What might Jesus be saying to you at this time?
- This gospel relates the experience of a personal encounter with the divine. Recall an experience you have had of encountering God or an intuition of God touching your life. Share your reflections.
- Spend extra time this week listening to the 'beloved Son'. What is Jesus saying to you?
- Use today's collect as your prayer this week:

O God, who have commanded us to listen to your beloved Son, be pleased, we pray, to nourish us inwardly with your word, that, with spiritual sight made pure, we may rejoice to behold your glory.

SHARING THE TRADITION

A closer look at the Scripture of the day, to see how it makes more explicit God's word to us through the teachings of Jesus Christ

Prayer is a vital necessity ... if we do not allow the Spirit to lead us, we fall back into the slavery of sin.

(CCC, §2744)

The tradition and life of prayer for Christians is richly explored in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. In the current period of purification and enlightenment, it is appropriate to spend some time helping the elect identify forms of prayer that will strengthen their faith and sustain it into their future lives as members of the Church.

- Part Four of the catechism provides extensive material on places, forms and styles of prayer.
• You could present some examples from the history of the great contemplatives (for example, John of the Cross, Hildegard of Bingen or Thérèse of Lisieux).
• Encourage the elect to talk about their own styles of prayer and to explore other ways (for example, praying the Scriptures or using a mantra).
• You could explain the rosary and the sets of mysteries, suggesting them as one way of prayerfully focusing on events in the life of Jesus and Mary.
• 'We pray as we live, because we live as we pray' (CCC, §2725). Explore the meaning of this.

SYMBOLS AND IMAGES

The cloud symbolises the presence of God. It reveals his divine presence but also conceals it, thereby protecting the witnesses from the full power of his glory. Moses encountered the same phenomenon (Exodus 24:15). In the Hebrew Scriptures, flame and smoke are other common symbols for God's presence, such as in the burning bush (Exodus 3) or on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19).

LIVING THE WORD

Practical ideas for group leaders to employ in connecting Scripture and daily life, with suggestions for music and environment

- Does your community offer opportunities for prayer beyond the weekly liturgy (for example, the Liturgy of the Hours, the rosary)? Are there prayer groups that the elect could join? Perhaps you could encourage them to simply come together to pray with and for each other.
• Use a contemplative prayer and a Taizé setting. Pray for each other as you near your journey's end. Conclude with the prayer over the elect in the RCIA at §122A.

NOTES

Dotted lines for taking notes.