

My Brothers and Sisters,

Just as the Gospel on the First Sunday of Lent is always the story of Jesus' forty-day fast in the desert and his temptations by the devil, the Gospel on the Second Sunday of Lent is always the story of his Transfiguration. Jesus' Transfiguration not only reveals Jesus to us but also us to ourselves.

In Luke's Gospel, the Transfiguration occurred eight days after Jesus' first prophecy of his passion, death, and resurrection. Shortly after the Transfiguration, Jesus prophesied his passion, death, and resurrection a second time. Also, there is an ancient tradition that the Transfiguration took place 40 days before his death. Therefore, the Transfiguration helped prepare the disciples for Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection.

After Jesus' first prophecy of his passion, death, and resurrection to his disciples, he said to everyone, "*If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.*" The Transfiguration helps us prepare for the inevitable crosses in our own lives confident that new life comes through the crosses in our lives.

Moses and Elijah represented the Old Testament Law and the Prophets. Therefore, their presence with Jesus was a sign that Jesus Himself was the fulfillment of the Old Testament Law and the Prophets. Their presence with Jesus on the mountain powerfully proclaims that Jesus is the fulfillment of our hopes and dreams.

When Jesus' was transfigured before them, the disciples were given a glimpse into Jesus' glory after the resurrection. Jesus' transfiguration is also a sign of hope for us. As St. Paul wrote to the Philippians, since our citizenship is in heaven, Jesus will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body.

Jesus' transfiguration was one of three times when we hear the voice of God the Father in the New Testament. Just as he did at Jesus' baptism, he authenticated Jesus as his Son. When we were baptized, we too became God's beloved sons and daughters. In his homily last Sunday in Mexico, Pope Francis said,

Our Father, he is the Father of a great family; he is our Father. He knows that he has a unique love, but he does not know how to bear or raise an "only child". He is the God of the home, of brotherhood, of bread broken and shared. He is the God who is "Our Father", not "my father" or "your stepfather".

God's dream makes its home and lives in each one of us so that at every Easter, in every Eucharist we celebrate, we may be the children of God.

If we are God's sons and daughters, we are called to live as God's sons and daughters. As Matthew Kelly wrote, God has an incredible dream for each and every one of us: he wants us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves, i.e., to be transfigured, transformed, into the likeness of the Risen Christ.

My brothers and sisters, today's readings from the Book of Genesis and Paul's Letter to the Philippians offer two concrete suggestions about how to live as God's sons and daughters. In Genesis, God made a quasi-covenant with Abram. Jesus established a new covenant of love between God and us. When we were baptized, we were baptized into this covenant, this relationship, of love. To live as God's sons and daughters is to respond to God's love for us by modeling our lives on Jesus' self-revealing, self-giving, self-sacrificing love for us. As St. Therese said, "Love is repaid by love alone."

More concretely, St. Paul encourages imitative morality: "*Join with others in being imitators of me, ... and observe those who thus conduct themselves according to the model you have in us.*" We should all have moral heroes in our lives whose example we try to imitate, and we should strive to become moral heroes whom others would want to imitate.