

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent - A  
Genesis 12:1-4a;  
2 Timothy 1:8b-10;  
Matthew 17:1-9  
Little Flower - 3/8/20

My Brothers and Sisters,

According to St. Paul, Abraham is our father in faith. Today's reading from Genesis captures what this means. God said to Abram, "*Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you....Abram went as the LORD directed him.*" In other words, God asked Abraham to give up the search for security and to set out on a journey to an unknown land and an unknown future with only God's word of promise to guide him. God asked Abraham to entrust his life and his future to God and God's word of promise. In other words, God asked Abraham to believe in him. This is the same faith to which God calls us.

Each year the Gospel for the Second Sunday of Lent tells the story of Jesus' transfiguration. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus' transfiguration came immediately after his first prophecy of his passion and his call to his disciples to take up their crosses and follow him.

We always say that actions speak louder than words. Jesus' transfiguration spoke two important truths. First, the appearance of Moses and Elijah with Jesus proclaimed that Jesus was indeed the promised fulfillment of the Old Testament Law and the Prophets. Second, Jesus' transfiguration gave the apostles Peter, James, and John a glimpse of the glory that would be his after his resurrection. After his prophecy of his passion and death and his call to them to take up their crosses and follow him, his transfiguration became a powerful symbol of hope that prepared and strengthened them for his impending passion and death.

Jesus' transfiguration also has meaning for our lives during Lent. Our Lenten journey is one of dying to selfishness and sin and rising to new life with Christ. The goal of our Lenten journey is our transfiguration, transformation, into the *likeness of the risen Christ*. If we are transformed into the likeness of the risen Christ, how might we look?

Our Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving suggest one answer. Christians are called to be pray-ers. Prayer was at the heart of Jesus' life. Several times we read in the Gospels that Jesus went off by himself and spent the night in prayer. If we are transformed into the likeness of the risen Christ, we will probably say fewer prayers but pray more. Our prayer will be intimate conversation with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. In our prayer, we will actually share with God all that is in our hearts. As part of our prayer, we will take time to be quiet and listen to God speaking to us in our minds and hearts. Also, we will more actively, more energetically, participate in Sunday Eucharist through prayer and song.

The fasting that most pleases God is fasting from sin. When we think of sin, we tend to think of bad actions. However, our actions tend to reflect our values, and our values tend to reflect the kind of people we are. Therefore, transformation into the likeness of the risen Christ involves a transformation of our hearts leading to a change in our values leading to a change in our actions. Our focus in life will shift from ourselves to God and to others.

Finally, people transformed into the likeness of the risen Christ are generous. They are generous in loving, generous in forgiving, generous in sharing their gifts with others, especially with those who are in need.

My brothers and sisters, Jesus' transfiguration also points to the gift of the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, simple bread and wine are transformed into the real body of blood of Christ. However, we, too, are transformed by the Eucharist. We are transformed into the body of Christ who pour out our lives in loving service to God and others. Through the Eucharist, then, we are transfigured into the likeness of the risen Christ.