

Transfiguration: Lent 2nd Sunday *There is a story told of an old woman, always cheerful and optimistic, even though she was confined to her room because of illness. She lived in an attic apartment on the fifth floor of an old, rundown building. A friend visiting her one day brought along another wealthy woman. Since there was no elevator, the two ladies began the long climb upward. When they reached the second floor, the well-to-do woman commented, "What a dark and filthy place!" Her friend replied, "It's better higher up." When they reached the third floor, she remarked, "Things look even worse here." Again, the reply, "It's better higher up." Reaching 5th floor, they found the bedridden holy woman of God. A smile on her face radiated the joy that filled her heart. Although the room was clean and flowers were set on the table, the wealthy visitor could not get over the stark surroundings in which this woman lived. She commented, "It must be very difficult for you to be here like this!" Without a moment's hesitation the shut-in, pointing towards heaven, responded, "It is better, higher up." She was not looking at the poor surroundings or her earthly sufferings. With the eyes of faith fixed on God, she was joyfully looking forward to the ultimate glory that awaited her.*

Last Sunday – 'The Temptation Sunday,' the Gospel Reading led us to the desert with Jesus, where he prayed and fasted for forty days & nights and was tempted by the devil; and we had a "desert experience". This Sunday, the Gospel Reading takes us to the mountain-top to meditate the mystery of the Transfiguration of the Lord Jesus, who calls us to 'holiness' by having a "mountain-top experience". In short, the transfiguration of Jesus is a small glimpse of the destination of our Lenten journey, ie., Christ's risen glory. On the Tabor Mountain top, Peter, John and James saw that there was more to Jesus than they could see. During the transfiguration, they got a *glimpse of the future glory of Jesus*'. That strengthened their faith. Like them we too get glimpses of the presence of God in our lives.

We get glimpses of God in the love we receive from other people. We get glimpses of God when badly needed help suddenly comes to us from out of nowhere. We get glimpses of God when we look back over our lives, and what we couldn't understand in the past makes sense now.

We see glimpses of God in the beauty of a fine day, a beautiful sunrise or sunset. We see glimpses of God, when a passage from the Bible or a homily strikes a chord in our heart. We get a glimpse of God, when we spend time in prayer, adoration, and experience the loving presence of God in our lives. But, we get more than just a glimpse of God when we receive the body of Jesus in Holy Communion.

When Jesus and the disciples came down the mountain, Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone about his transfiguration until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. Of course, they did not know what he meant. They would understand this only afterwards, when looking back.

The good times take us through the bad times. So when our cross is heavy, or when we are tempted to despair about the meaning of life, we need to look beyond the pain of the present moment and remember those times when we got glimpses of God, those times when God sent us his consolations. We need to look beyond the pain of life and see the presence of God in our world, and the offer of life God makes to us.

In today's *first reading*, we heard Abram being called by God to leave his present place and go to a new country. He was seventy-five when called to leave his own country, but he had to wait another twenty-five years for the promised son Isaac to be born. That was a long wait. It was a long time for him to be continually looking beyond the present, to the promise of God. Still, he put all his faith in God and received great rewards. With faith we can see what we cannot see with our eyes. On mount Tabor, Peter, James and John looked beyond the appearance of Jesus and saw his future glory. As we get ahead in our Lenten journey, let us look beyond, and see that God is really with us. God has not left us on our own, God is with us, especially when we are most vulnerable and weak, when we carry our big cross. Amen. Have a fruitful Lent!