

Homily of Second Sunday of Lent of Year A

The theme of our reflection is the transfiguration of Jesus. The verb 'to transfigure' has several definitions. One of them is, "to transform the appearance of something, revealing great beauty or magnificence." This was Jesus' experience as we have read in today's Gospel: "And he transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light." Jesus took Peter, James and John to witness his transfiguration, for them to have some idea of who he truly is; and be able to tell others what they witnessed. And because the three apostles witnessed the transfiguration, the story of what they witnessed is told till this present day. To transform appearance in order to reveal beauty means that it is what is originally present but hidden that is revealed. The glorious nature of Jesus revealed at transfiguration had been hidden from the apostles until the transfiguration.



The first reading is about the call of Abram to leave his kinsfolk and his father's house to another place God was going to show him. It was a call to transformation, a call to a new experience. When Abram left his father's land, he was never the same. Therefore, the call of Abram means that we are also called to leave behind 'our kinsfolk and father's house;' that is our sinful way of life, to the land God will show us; that is new life in Christ. The first reading concludes, "Abram went as the Lord directed him." We are invited to respond like Abram. The second reading says, "He saved us and called us to a holy life, not according to our works but according to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus..." This call is not according to our works. It is not according to the way we want it, but according to God's design, and when we accept the call, God's grace leads us. God does not send us to any place where his grace will not lead us. God is always faithful. We are the unfaithful ones.

God made each of us with great beauty and magnificence. Genesis 1:31 writes, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." We are part of the beauty. Psalm 139:13-14 confirms that each one of us is wonderfully and beautifully made; but our sins and weaknesses hide our wonder and beauty. Therefore, we are invited to transfigure, to transform, in order that our original beauty and wonder can be revealed. The call to transfigure is a call to conversion, a call to reconciliation, a call to restoration, and a call to originality. That is the central message of Lent.

The invitations in the three readings require us to do what St. Ignatius calls examen, that is a prayerful reflection of one's life in order to discern God's presence or God's absence. We are invited to pray for God's grace for the removal of layers of sins and weaknesses that envelope and hide our beauty and magnificence. None of us is free from the layers. St. Paul says, "For all have sinned and fallen short the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Some of the layers that hide our beauty and wonder:

I used to be happy and peaceful, but now I am unhappy and angry. I used to be prayerful, but now I have little or no interest for prayer. I used to be grateful, but now I am full of resentment and ingratitude. I used to be sincere, but now I tell a lot of lies. I used to live a good moral life, but now I live worldly life. I used to be obedient, but now I am disobedient and stubborn. I used to be hard working, but now I am lazy. I used to be self-content, but now I am greedy, envious and jealous. I used to be friendly, but now I hate; I keep malice. I can't stop gossiping, criticizing, and maligning. I used to be easy going but now I do not forgive. I am unable to bring myself to reconciliation. I used to be generous, but now I am mean. I used to be very understanding, but now I am quarrelsome. I used to be courageous, but now I am very fearful and anxious. I used to have self control, but now I can't stop eating and drinking. I can't stop shopping.

There are some other layers that hide our beauty and magnificence, we pray to God to remove them. Some of the layers are ill-health, hardship, trials, crises, people who do not wish us well. We need transfiguration in our place of work, place of business, family, parish, Church, etc. The Country needs transfiguration. Our political and economic leaders need transfiguration. The world needs transfiguration, that we will know peace and justice. We pray that our hidden great beauty and magnificence may be restored. Amen.