

Homily of Second Sunday of Lent of Year A 2020

Last Sunday's first reading was about the sin of disobedience of Adam and Eve. In Genesis Chapter 11 is the story of the sin of rebellion of the builders of the Tower of Babel. God scattered the builders over all the earth. After Noah, there was no record in the Book of Genesis of true worshippers of God. God, then, called Abram to begin a new phase of God's relationship with human beings, which also marks the beginning of the story of God's Chosen People. God called Abram who was a pagan to leave his pagan kinsfolks and his pagan father's house to where God would reveal himself to him, and then, make him a great nation. The first reading concludes, "Abram went as the Lord directed him."

The call of Abram means that God wants to begin a new relationship with us and wants us to leave behind us the sins of disobedience and rebellion. If we respond positively to God's call and follow as God directs us, we will merit God's abundant blessings.

It's worthy of note that out of the entire people of Ur of the Chaldeans, God called only one man, Abram, to establish a new and great nation. God may be calling anyone of us to something new and great. May we be able to respond positively like Abram as God directs.

Abram was 75 years when God called him to begin a new journey and a new life. The call of Abram also means that it is never too late to bloom. Seniors who are psychologically young at heart, in mind and spirit have more positive attitude towards life than some young people who are old-aged at heart, in mind and in spirit. There is some truth in the saying, "Age is a state of mind."

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 the way we want it. It is according to God's design. If we accept the call as God designs it, God's grace leads us forward. God does not send us to any place where his grace will not sustain us. God is always faithful although we are unfaithful most of the time.

In the Gospel, Jesus took his disciples and transfigured before them; "his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light." I believe that Jesus took Peter, James and John to witness his transfiguration, for them to have some idea who he truly is, and be able to tell others what they witnessed. Because the three apostles witnessed the transfiguration, the story of what they witnessed is told till this day.

To transfigure means to transform the appearance of something in order to reveal great beauty or magnificence that is present but hidden. The glorious nature of Jesus revealed at transfiguration had been hidden from the apostles.

God made each of us with great beauty and magnificence. In Genesis 1:31, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." We are part of that beauty. Psalm 139:13-14 confirms that each one of us is wonderfully and beautifully made. Unfortunately, layers of sins, weaknesses, and ugly experiences hide our wonder and beauty. Therefore, we are invited to transfigure in order that our original beauty and wonder may be revealed. The call to transfigure is a call to conversion and restoration.

The three readings invite us to pray for God's grace to remove the layers of sins, weaknesses, and ugly experiences that hide our beauty and magnificence. None of us is free from the layers. St. Paul says, "For all have sinned and fallen short of 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 to pray. I used to be grateful, but now I am ungrateful. I used to be sincere, but now I tell lies. I used to live a good moral life, but now I live a 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 am resentful. I used to be self-restraint but now I gossip, criticize, and malign. I used to be easy going but now I find it difficult to reconcile and forgive. I used to be generous, but now I am unkind. I used to be understanding, but now I am quarrelsome. I used to be courageous, but now I am very fearful and anxious. And so on.

There are some other layers that hide our beauty and magnificence and we pray that God intervenes and removes them: layers of ill-health, of hardship, of trials, of crises, and other afflictions. We need transfiguration in our places of work, places of business, plans, family, parish, Church, and so on. Our Country needs transfiguration. Our political and economic leaders need transfiguration. Our world needs transfiguration. May our hidden beauty and magnificence be revealed and restored. Amen.

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