

Homily – Second Sunday of Lent (Matthew 17: The Transfiguration)

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Introduction

Did you also enjoy the warm temperatures this past Wednesday? At last, a deep blue sky and radiant sunshine. It felt like a small foretaste of summer.

Point 1

Peter, James, and John were given a foretaste too: a foretaste of a glorified, resurrected Jesus.

There on the mountain, suddenly Jesus shone: His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became dazzling white.

It is already an image of the Risen, the glorified Jesus. He is transfigured. Before the eyes of the disciples, His appearance is changed. His face shines. His clothing is white. Something of God breaks through.

In this second week of Lent, we are allowed to glimpse something of the Resurrection, of the glorified Christ. The divine face of Jesus is revealed. Before the eyes of John, James, and Peter, He is shown as the fullness of the Law and the Prophets. The glorified Jesus stands between the representatives of the Law—Moses—and of the Prophets—Elijah.

This looking forward to Easter, to the Resurrection, is important. It is the reason why we are celebrating Lent. We prepare to meet the resurrected Jesus Christ.

Point 2

It is important to read carefully how Jesus is transfigured. Jesus is changed in appearance—passively. He does not do this Himself. He is transformed.

During this season of Lent, we try to change our lives. We try to improve our way of living.

Perhaps

- you are fasting. Eating less. Or
- living a few weeks without Instagram.
- Maybe you give an extra coin to the beggar outside the supermarket, or donate to a worthy project.
- Or you are trying to come to church more often, or to pray more faithfully.

All good and beautiful things. Attempts to draw closer to God.

And yet, they are only attempts—attempts to make space in our lives for God. To allow God to work within us. We try to prepare ourselves so that God may transform us.

Point 3

For the disciples, this must have been an extraordinary and probably overwhelming experience.

Their first reaction is to try to hold on to it: Peter's proposal to build tents for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah.

It is a very normal reaction. Something beautiful and good: and so: let keep that moment. Let fix it in three tents.

It is always difficult to let go of something beautiful and good. We could not hold on to last Wednesday's lovely weather. And as with every attempt to cling to such moments, this one also fails.

Point 4

And instead of Peter's attempt to hold on to this moment of glory: a cloud comes over the disciples. A cloud which corrects Peter's mistaken suggestion.

How often is that not our reality too: we try to react on God's goodness, but we make mistakes.

Gently the cloud comes over the disciples and tells them that Jesus is the beloved Son of God.

And then they kneel.

Point 5

And then Jesus says:

“Rise, and do not be afraid.”

The transfiguration of Jesus—the greatness of God—is impressive, but not frightening. It is not meant to make us feel small or afraid. It is meant to raise us up. To draw us into the Resurrection.

And so Jesus' words to His disciples are also spoken to us:

“Rise, and do not be afraid.”

Yes, Lent is a time of repentance and sorrow for what is not right in our lives. But it is a turning away from ourselves in order to turn toward God. To lift our eyes and see Jesus.

The text says so beautifully: “And they saw no one but Jesus alone.”

Perhaps that is a beautiful challenge for this Lenten season: to see only Jesus. To turn our gaze a little away from good food, fine clothes, and social media posts—and to fix our eyes on Jesus, and on Him alone.

Conclusion

- In this second week of Lent, we are already allowed to glimpse the glorified, the Risen Jesus. God reveals Him in His glory.
- God transforms us. And we are invited to cooperate with that transformation, especially during this Lenten season.
- As we look ahead to Easter, the message is clear: Do not be afraid. Rise. And look to Jesus.

Amen.