

Sunday, March 8, 2020

2nd Sunday of Lent

Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

Mass Readings:

1st Reading: Genesis 12:1-4

2nd Reading: 2 Timothy 1:8-10

Responsorial: Psalm 33:4-5, 18-20, 22

Gospel: Matthew 17:1-9

Spending More Time with the Lord During this Lenten Season of Grace

If you wish, I will make three tents. (Matthew 17:4)

“Three tents? There he goes again,” we might think. “It’s just Peter making another rash statement and getting it wrong.” But did Peter get it wrong?

Not really. Remember that Jesus himself brought Peter to the mountaintop with James and John. Now there they were, watching Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus, who was bathed in his Father’s glory. It might not have made perfect sense to Peter, but he knew it was something good. He was so delighted that of course he wanted to pitch some tents and stay.

This “mountaintop” experience must have shored up Peter’ faith. He saw the glory of God! He heard God say that Jesus is his beloved Son and that he is worth listening to. All of these things were very good. Did Peter need to go back down the mountain and continue to follow Jesus to the cross? Yes, but that didn’t take away his need to be on that mountain—his need to be strengthened and filled.

Jesus is calling you to come away with him to a high mountain too. He is asking you to make time for him every day. Pray. Go to Mass. Ponder his word. Sit in his presence, and be filled with awe and wonder at who he is. But don’t stop there. God has a message for you today. He wants to touch your heart and speak to you. Just as Peter heard, “This is my beloved Son” (Matthew 17:5), you can listen for the Holy Spirit to say, “Behold the Lamb of God” when you receive Jesus in Communion. Or “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord” when it’s time to come down from the mountain.

Remember, it’s not selfish to set aside time to be with Jesus. You’re not running away from problems when you take time to pray. It’s always good to come away with him—as long as you are willing to follow him out into the world as well.

“Lord, I love you and want to make time for you every day!”

(Many thanks to *The Word Among Us* (www.wau.org) for allowing us to use meditations from their monthly devotional magazine. Used with permission.)

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Questions for Reflection or Discussion:

1. In the first reading, the Lord says these words to Abraham: *Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you.* The reading ends with these words: *Abram went as the LORD directed him.*
 - In what ways has the Lord fulfilled these words to Abraham?
 - What do these words of the Lord mean to you: *I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you.* How do they apply to us today?
 - Abraham was obedient to the Lord's direction. How obedient are you to the Lord's direction?
2. The responsorial psalm opens with these words: *Upright is the word of the LORD, and all his works are trustworthy. He loves justice and right; of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full. See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him, upon those who hope for his kindness, To deliver them from death and preserve them in spite of famine. Our soul waits for the LORD, who is our help and our shield.* The psalm closes with these uplifting words: *May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us who have put our hope in you.*
 - In the psalm, the words *hope* and *kindness* appear multiple times. What are some of the reasons given by the psalmist for putting our hope in *the kindness of the LORD*?
 - What are your reasons for putting your trust and hope *the kindness of the LORD*?
 - How can you use this Lent to increase your "trust" and "hope" in God?
3. In the second reading, St. Paul speaks these words: *Bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God. He saved us and called us to a holy life, not according to our works but to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began, but now made manifest through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*
 - In the reading, why does St. Paul make *the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus* more important than any works we perform?
 - In what ways can our practices of Lenten piety become "works," rather than a reflection of God's graces?
 - How can you use the traditional practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving during Lent to open yourself to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ?
4. The Gospel reading begins with these words: *Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him.* It continues with these words: *While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid.*
 - In the reading, we hear God the Father say these words: *This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.* Why are you also a beloved son (or daughter) of your heavenly Father?
 - Why is knowing this important in helping us to live out our Christian life?
5. The meditation is a reflection on the Gospel reading on the Transfiguration. It includes these words: "Jesus is calling you to come away with him to a high mountain too. He is asking you to make time for him every day. Pray. Go to Mass. Ponder his word. Sit in his presence, and be filled with awe and wonder at who he is. But don't stop there. God has a message for you today. He wants to touch your heart and speak to you. Just as Peter heard, 'This is my beloved Son' (Matthew 17:5), you can listen for the Holy Spirit to say, 'Behold the Lamb of God' when you receive Jesus in Communion. Or 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord' when it's time to come down from the mountain."
 - In what ways do you believe that each day, "Jesus is calling you to come away with him to a high mountain"?
 - As we enter into the 2nd week of Lent, what steps can you take to bring glory to God in your Lenten practices?
 - What can you do to "Ponder his word. Sit in his presence, and be filled with awe and wonder at who he is"?

Take some time to pray and ask the Lord for the grace to spend quality time with him in prayer each day and for the grace to glorify him through your daily life? Use the prayer below from the end of the meditation as the starting point.

"Lord, I love you and want to make time for you every day!"

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, who is currently a member of the board of directors of the ChristLife Catholic Ministry for Evangelization (www.christlife.org), a member of the National Service Committee Council of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (www.nsc-chariscenter.org), and a board member of The Love of Christ Foundation. Prior to this, Maurice was the founding executive director of the National fellowship of Catholic Men, a chairman of the board of *The Word Among Us* (www.wau.org), and a director of partner relations for The Word Among Us Partners ministry. He can be contacted at mblumberg@wau.org or mblumberg@aol.com.]