Second Sunday of Lent (B)

Gospel text (*Mk* 9:2-10): After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus.

Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified. Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; then from the cloud came a voice: “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.” Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them.

As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant.

“Jesus went up the mountain to pray”

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Today we contemplate the scene "in which the three Apostles Peter, James and John appear entranced by the beauty of the Redeemer" (Saint John Paul II): "He was transfigured before them, and His clothes became dazzling white" (Mk 9:2-3). As far as we are concerned, we can draw out a message from the words of Saint Paul, when he assures his disciple Timothy that “Christ Jesus destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel" (2 Tim 1:10). This is what we contemplate with amazement in this episode of the second Sunday of Lent, just like the three beloved Apostles at that time: the Transfiguration.

It is good that in our Lenten practice, we welcome this burst of sun and light emanating from Jesus' face and clothes. This is a wonderful icon of redeemed humanity, which no longer appears in the ugliness of sin, but in all the beauty that divinity imparts to our flesh. Peter's reaction is an expression of what we feel when overwhelmed by divine grace.

The Holy Spirit also transfigures the senses of the Apostles, and thanks to this, they can witness the divine glory of the Man Jesus. Transfigured eyes to see what shines brighter; transfigured ears to hear the most sublime and true voice: that of the Father who rejoices in his Son. All of this is too astonishing for us, accustomed as we are to the greyness of mediocrity. Only if we let Our Lord touch us with his Grace, will our senses be able to see and hear what is most beautiful and joyful, in God, and in holy men and women divinized by the One who rose from the dead.

Saint John Paul II wrote: "Christian spirituality is distinguished by the disciple's commitment to become conformed ever more fully to his Master," in such a way that - through an attentiveness “which could be described in terms of friendship” - we come to the point to “share his deepest feelings." Let us place in the hands of Saint Mary the goal of our true "transfiguration" into her Son, Jesus Christ.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Still further instruction was conveyed by that miracle. For Moses and Elias, that is the Law and the Prophets, appeared talking with the Lord. For the pages of both covenants corroborate each other. Because, as says the blessed John, the law was given through Moses: but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (Saint Leo the Great)

- “We all need to go apart, to ascend the mountain in a space of silence, to find ourselves and better perceive the voice of the Lord. But we cannot stay there! Encounter with God in prayer inspires us anew to “descend the mountain” and return to the plain where we meet many brothers weighed down by fatigue, injustice, poverty both material and spiritual.” (Francis)

- “From the day Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Master ‘began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things... and be killed, and on the third day be raised’ (Mt 16:21). In this context the mysterious episode of Jesus' Transfiguration takes place on a high mountain, before three witnesses chosen by himself: Peter, James and John. Jesus' face and clothes become dazzling with light, and Moses and Elijah appear, speaking ‘of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem’ (Lk 9:31). A cloud covers him and a voice from heaven says: ‘This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!’ (Lk 9:35).” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, № 554)