

Second Sunday of Lent (C)

Gospel text (Lk 9:28-36): Jesus took Peter, John, and James and went up the mountain to pray. While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem.

Peter and his companions had been overcome by sleep, but becoming fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As they were about to part from him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” But he did not know what he was saying. While he was still speaking, a cloud came and cast a shadow over them, and they became frightened when they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my chosen Son; listen to him.” After the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. They fell silent and did not at that time tell anyone what they had seen.

“Jesus went up the mountain to pray”

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Today second Sunday in Lent, the liturgy of the word invariably brings us the evangelic episode of the Lord's Transfiguration. This time, with the nuances typical of saint Luke's Gospel.

It is Saint Luke who more strongly emphasizes the praying Jesus, the Son who is permanently linked to the Father through personal prayer, at times intimate,

hidden, at times in the presence of his disciples, but always full of joy through the Holy Spirit.

Let's therefore pay attention to the fact Luke is the only one of the synoptics that begins the narration in this way: “Jesus (...) went up the mountain to pray” (Lk 9:28), and, consequently, it is Luke who specifies that the Master's transfiguration happened “while He was praying” (Lk 9:29). And this is not something irrelevant.

The prayer is presented here like the ideal and natural context for the vision of Christ's Glory: when Peter, John and James “fully awake (...) and saw his glory” (Lk 9:32). But, not only his glory, but also the glory God had already manifested in the Law and the Prophets; they —evangelist Luke says— “appeared in glory” (Lk 9:31). For they indeed find their own splendor in the love of the Spirit when the Son speaks to the Father. Thus, in the heart of Holy Trinity, Jesus' Passover, “his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem” (Lk 9:31), is the sign manifesting God's plan, which is carried out in the bosom of Israel's history, until its definite completion, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Jesus Incarnated.

It is good to remember, in this Lent and always, that unless we let the spirit of piety to emerge in our life, establishing a familiar and inseparable relationship with the Lord, we shall not be able to enjoy the contemplation of His Glory. It's urgent to be impressed by the vision of the Transfigured face. Maybe our Christian experience has an excess of words while it lacks astonishment, that astonishment that made Peter and his friends' actual witnesses of the living Christ.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“Let no one be ashamed of Christ's cross, through which the world was redeemed. Since all the weakness of our humility was assumed by Him, in Whom, if we abide in the acknowledgment and love of Him, we conquer as He conquered, and receive what he promised.” (Saint Leo the Great)

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“Jesus thus chooses to give to Peter, James and John a foretaste of his glory, which He will have after the Resurrection, in order to confirm them in faith and encourage them to follow Him on the trying path, on the Way of the Cross.” (Francis)

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“For a moment Jesus discloses his divine glory, confirming Peter's confession. He also reveals that he will have to go by the way of the cross at Jerusalem in order to ‘enter into his glory’ (Lk 24:26). Moses and Elijah had seen God's glory on the Mountain; the Law and the Prophets had announced the Messiah's sufferings. Christ's Passion is the will of the Father: the Son acts as God's servant.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 555)