

Homily (notes) from Canon Philip Dyson

5th March 2023 - 2nd Sunday of Lent

Readings (Year A): 1st: Genesis 12:1-4. 2nd: 2 Timothy 1:8-10. **Gospel:** Matthew 17:1-9

Pope Francis in his message for Lent this year (web link below) uses the account of the Transfiguration as a focus for our minds during all of Lent. We clergy have been encouraged to use it especially today. He points to the Lord's response to the failure of his disciples to understand him.

The Transfiguration comes a week following Peter's Confession, 'You are the Christ' and then Peter's rejection of Jesus' prediction of the Passion and Cross, and Jesus' firm rebuke 'Get behind me Satan.'

During this season of Lent Jesus takes us with Him to a place apart. In Lent we are invited to ascend 'a high mountain' in the company of Jesus and to live a particular experience of spiritual discipline as God's holy people.

Lenten penance is a commitment, sustained by grace, to overcoming our lack of faith and our resistance to following Jesus on the way of the cross. This is what Peter and the other disciples needed to do.

To deepen our knowledge of Jesus, to fully understand and embrace the mystery of his salvation, accomplished in total self-giving inspired by love, we must allow ourselves to be taken aside by him and to detach from mediocrity and vanity.

We need to set out on an uphill path, that, like a mountain trek requires effort, sacrifice and concentration.

Pope Francis does link this too with the synodal journey he asks all the church to make. The summit is the glory of God resplendent in his Son Jesus.

During any strenuous mountain trek, we must keep our eyes firmly fixed on the path, yet the panorama that opens up at the end amazes us and rewards us by its grandeur.

So too, Lent and the Synodal process may often seem arduous, and at times we may become discouraged. Yet what awaits us at the end is undoubtedly something wondrous and amazing, which will help us to understand better God's will and our mission in the service of his kingdom.

The disciple's experience was further enriched when Moses and Elijah appeared representing the Law and the Prophets.

The newness of Christ is at the same time the fulfilment of the ancient covenant and promises; it is inseparable from God's history with his people and discloses its deeper meaning.

In similar way the synodal journey is rooted in the Church's tradition and at the same time open to newness.

The Lenten and synodal journey alike have as their goal a transfiguration both personal and ecclesial. Pope Francis proposes two paths to follow in order to ascend the mount with Jesus and, with him, to attain the goal.

The first is the voice of the Father: "Listen to him." Listen to Jesus. In the word of God, as Jesus speaks to us in all the scriptures. May that word not fall on deaf ears.

Jesus also speaks to us through our brothers and sisters, especially in the faces of those in great need. Listening to each other is also quite a part of the synodal journey.

The second path is 'do not take refuge in a religiosity made up of extraordinary events and dramatic experiences, out of fear of facing reality and its daily struggles, its hardships and contradictions.

The light that Jesus shows the disciples is an anticipation of Easter glory, and that must be the goal of our own journey, as we follow 'him alone.'

Lent leads to Easter: a means of preparing us to experience the Lord's Passion and Cross with faith, hope, and love, and thus to arrive at the resurrection.

The Lord there says to us "rise, and do not be afraid." Let us go down then to the plain and may the grace we have experienced strengthen us in the ordinary life of our communities.

Pope Francis ends: Dear Brothers and sisters may the Holy Spirit inspire and sustain us this Lent in our ascent with Jesus, so that we may experience his divine splendour and thus, confirmed in faith, persevere in our journey together with him, glory of his people and light of the nations.

© Canon Philip Dyson & Holy Family RC Parish www.penzancecatholicchurch.org

Message of Pope Francis for Lent 2023

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2023/02/17/230217c.pdf>