

2nd Sunday of Lent

Leaping into the unknown

Most people, including myself, dread the unknown. This is because too often, we hold on to what is familiar to us. Some of us lack the courage to leap into the unknown. We allow fear to hold us back from venturing into unfamiliar paths.

I remember how I felt some 21 years ago when my bishop asked me to come to the United States to minister in the Syracuse diocese. My initial reaction was one of excitement. I embraced the overseas assignment to get a new exposure. But then, as the day drew near for me to leave Ghana for the United States, the fear of the unknown started creeping in on me. It dawned on me that I would be far away from my family, friends, and loved ones and would be missing their presence. But I took the challenge to leap into the unknown and for it to push me towards new life experiences.

The readings for this second Sunday of Lent talk about the need for faith, hope, and transformation in our lives. In the first reading, God told Abram to go from his country, his kindred, and father's house to an unknown land. We can imagine how Abram felt when he heard this call to step into the unknown. He did not know what would become of him, yet he trusted God with his life. Abram and his wife Sarah recognized what God had intended for them from afar. God was pleased with Abram's faith and he made a covenant with him which was sealed in the ritual of an animal sacrifice. God promised to make Abram's descendants as countless as the stars in the sky. He later renamed Abram as Abraham, meaning, the father of all nations.

In the gospel, Jesus gave His three disciples a glimpse of heaven on Mount Tabor. Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him and led them up to the mountain for prayer. Here, He was transfigured before His disciples. His face changed in appearance and His clothing became dazzling white.

Moses and Elijah appeared and conversed with Jesus concerning His impending passion, death and resurrection. The presence of Moses and Elijah at the scene were significant. Both of them represent the Jewish Law and the prophets respectively.

Peter enjoyed the loveliness of the transfiguration experience very much so he suggested building three tents, one each for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. He wanted all of them to stay there forever. While Peter was speaking a bright cloud overshadowed them and from it came a voice that declared Jesus as the Beloved Son of God, the One whom we should listen to.

When the cloud disappeared, the three disciples saw Jesus alone. Jesus came down from the mountain with His disciples and He told them not to disclose this special incident to anyone until after His resurrection from the dead.

Saint Paul reminds us in the second reading that our citizenship is in heaven where we hope to be in complete union with God for all eternity. Saint Paul exhorts all of us to focus on our heavenly home and not just limit our gaze at this earthly and transient life.

The psalmist proclaims that the Lord is our light and our salvation. With the psalmist, we acknowledge the Lord as our stronghold and we seek His presence in our lives.

As pilgrims on a journey, let us climb the mountaintop with the Lord in today's Eucharistic celebration, and ask Him to transform and transfigure our lives. Like the disciples, let us step out of our comfort zones to serve the needs of one another while keeping our eyes heavenward for the glory awaiting us in the Lord.

God bless,

Fr. Dr. Ben