

Homily. 2nd Sunday of Lent. Year. C. 12/13 March 2022.

Each year Lent begins by offering us the gospel stories of the temptations of Jesus on the first weekend, and His transfiguration on the second. In reality, a long time transpired between these two events. By compressing them for us into just two weekends, our Church wants us to understand important truths about the historical person of Jesus, and more importantly about our life in Him. For the gift of Lent is to remind us yet again, that He lives and dwells now in you and me and that our lives and the life of all, is forever caught up in His life and saving action for us.

From the hunger and stress of His fast and struggle in the desert with Satan, rejecting all of the tricks and deceits that so sorely tempted Him to serve Himself and His own desires, Jesus chose to make His ministry a work of service for us, in God's name and Spirit. In this work, He knew that He would have to give Himself over and away totally to God's plan, not to the plans His disciples and others had for Him. They thought of the Messiah, the Christ, as a victorious warrior, leader and King who would overthrow the Romans and all who were oppressing Israel, a type of new and perfect David who would come to rule in glory over God's people in justice, love and peace in the way they imagined God willed.

Their understanding of the long awaited Messiah was weighed down by expectations that we're of its time and of this world and was for the people of Israel only. God, however, had a much more expansive and welcoming vision, a plan to embrace and save all of humanity and the world itself. It was, as it remains, a plan to be worked out by total love and self-giving, the gift of Jesus Himself for all. It was, as it has become for us, a new exodus and passing over not just of human and earthly power,

but of everyone into a new liberated and spiritual dimensional way of living. It was about this sort of exodus and passing over, that Moses and Elijah, representing both the Law and all of the Prophets, were speaking to Jesus. It was to this event, this revelation of God's greater plan and will that Peter, James and John were witnesses.

How come, then, was it that Peter didn't know what he was saying? Why was it that afterwards they all remained silent about what they had seen, heard and felt? Thinking about their confusion and silence, we begin to see that it came about because, quite simply, they couldn't get their minds and hearts around what God wanted, so far was God's way beyond and above their own thoughts and plans. Just think of ourselves who have the benefit of the light of the Lord's resurrection to help us, yet we struggle with what God wants and where God is leading us. Honestly, are we really much better than those three disciples of 2000 years ago?

Marvellously and compassionately, God knows all about our human limits and frailties, just as God knew these things about those sleepy, befuddled followers on the day of the Lord's transfiguration. To guide and help us, God issued a new commandment; that we listen to the Beloved Son, God's Chosen One. For it is only by listening deeply to His words and way of living, that we can become clearer in our understanding of Jesus' message and better imitate the pattern of His life. If our Lent ends up meaning no more than obeying this new 'listening to our Lord with all of our hearts' commandment, that alone will be a fruit worth having and a victory of grace and for God, over our deadly and destructive selfishness.