



Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday of Lent | March 12, 2017

A Faith So Strong

By Mary Katharine Deeley

Some people get excited about moving. I'm not one of them. I don't like the boxes and the mess, and I find it hard to get settled in a new place. So I can't imagine what seventy-five-year-old Abram thought when God told him to leave his homeland and set out for a place he had never seen.

I stand in wonder of faith so strong that it finds the word of God compelling with no evidence that the promises will come true. But in our long history as a people of God, God is forever waking

people up or giving them a vision of a different life, usually far from where they are.

So it is with our spiritual life as well. In today's Gospel, Jesus leads Peter, James, and John up a high mountain and into a vision of Jesus as the glorious Son of God. Wherever they had been in their faith, this was a radical call to move, to grow deeper, and to embrace the identity of the man they called Jesus. Until that moment, Jesus was a compelling preacher and healer. On top of that mountain, he became the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets (Moses and Elijah represent those parts of the Old Testament canon).

When Peter, James, and John heard "Listen to him" coming from the cloud, they could no longer pretend this was an ordinary religious figure. They would never be the same, and the journey would lead them to the cross and beyond. Are you being asked to move in your spiritual life? Where will that take you? †

Sunday Readings

Genesis 12:1-4a

"I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing."

2 Timothy 1:8b-10

"Bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God."

Matthew 17:1-9

"But Jesus came and touched them, saying, 'Rise, and do not be afraid.'"

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Jesus became the
fulfillment of the
Law and the Prophets.*

A Word From Pope Francis

The first duty of the Christian is to listen to the Word of God, to listen to Jesus, because he speaks to us and he saves us by his word. And by this word he makes our faith even stronger and more robust. Listen to Jesus! "But, Father, I do listen to Jesus, I listen a lot!" "Yes? What do you listen to?" "I listen to the radio, I listen to the television, I listen to people gossip." We listen to so many things throughout the day, so many things....But I ask you a question: do we take a little time each day to listen to Jesus?

—Homily,
March 16, 2014



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Where is your Lenten journey leading you?
- Do you believe in God's promises without question? Or have you struggled to believe this Lent?



Mountaintop Moments

By Kathleen M. Basi

Every year the story of the transfiguration comes around on the second Sunday of Lent. The poor disciples don't quite know what to do during this experience. Peter wants to build altars to try and capture the moment. He catches a lot of flak for it, but maybe he was on to something. After all, sometimes you need a beautiful vision to hang on to when the going gets tough.

After leaving the mountain, Jesus and the disciples journey to Jerusalem. Jesus

goes from being proclaimed the Messiah to hanging on a cross, tortured and murdered, his band of followers broken by betrayal and scattered by fear.

We all experience transcendent moments when life seems picture perfect and our dreams seem to be taking tangible form. But all too often these moments of glory are followed in short order by some excruciatingly difficult experience—doubt, loss, devastating illness. Sometimes life spins us around

and sets us back down in the same place and we discover the life we once found so full of joy is now crowded with suffering.

Perhaps those “mountaintop” experiences are a free gift of grace, a glimpse of what is real, of what is pure, lovely, and gracious. They give us something to cling to when life seems to be falling to pieces around us.

Jesus probably needed that moment to fortify himself for the passion—but his human companions needed it more. The disciples were about to have their faith shaken to its foundation. They were about to question whether everything they had come to believe about this man was wrong. Up on that mountain, God gave the disciples a preview of the glory that lies beyond the valley of the shadow. †

Source: *Liguorian*,
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God Behind the Scenes

By Kathleen M. Basi

Several times over the past few years, I've made major life shifts on the spur of the moment. For instance, starting a weight-loss program or potty training a toddler. One day, without any discussion or preparation, I said, “That's it, I'm doing this now.” And I did.

As time passes, though, I'm beginning to realize that these “abrupt” direction changes aren't sudden at all. Always, in the weeks or months before the turning point, there's an undercurrent of awareness buried deep down. Questions form in unguarded moments but go unanswered.

Weight loss and toilet training may


seem like trivial examples, but they illustrate a deeper truth. God is always working in the background, and God will eventually punch through our distractions and nudge us in a new direction.

That's not to say we can just sit by and wait for God to beat through the tangled web of busyness we build around our consciousness. It's our job to navigate the “undercurrent” until it melds into smoother waters. We have to nurture the spiritual life and be open to God's guidance—on his timeline, not ours. The most important insights and decisions cannot be rushed. God works through processes, and there just aren't any shortcuts.

Embrace these times, even when they make life uncomfortable. There's a purity of mind in discerning and pursuing new directions that automatically brings our focus toward God. In these moments,

when we become aware of that deep, quiet current running beneath the clutter and static of life, we can feel that God abides within us. And that is a great blessing. †

Source: *Liguorian*,
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Lord, open my ears to hear your invitation to listen to your Son in the word of God and my heart to discern what it means to be your humble servant.

— From *Mindful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

March 13–18

Mon. Lenten Weekday:
Dn 9:4b–10 / Lk 6:36–38


Tue. Lenten Weekday:
Is 1:10, 16–20 / Mt 23:1–12

Wed. Lenten Weekday:
Jer 18:18–20 / Mt 20:17–28

Thu. Lenten Weekday:
Jer 17:5–10 / Lk 16:19–31

Fri. Lenten Weekday:
Gn 37:3–4, 12–13a, 17b–28a /
Mt 21:33–43, 45–46

Sat. Lenten Weekday:
Mi 7:14–15, 18–20 / Lk 15:1–3, 11–32

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