



Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday of Lent (A)
March 5, 2023

What a Blessing!

By Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Today’s readings don’t seem Lenten. They are uplifting, not penitential. God makes promises to Abram of extraordinary good fortune, political protection, and international status. The man must have been thrilled. Paul reminds Timothy that the life of holiness and blessing to which we have been called is a gift from God; always available to us, and not a reward for any good works we might have performed. And then we hear of Jesus’ transfiguration in the sight of a few disciples. They were so overwhelmed by that spectacular experience they wanted to pitch tents so they wouldn’t have to

leave the place. How are such wondrous ideas penitential?

While God’s marvelous blessings are free gifts, we are expected to respond to them appropriately, to accept them and use them for the common good. Abram’s blessings were not simply for him and his family. “All the families of the earth will find blessing in you” (Genesis 12:3). His blessings would open a door to others—other nations, other ethnic groups, other religious communities. Abram was not simply chosen by God. He was chosen so that others might be blessed through him.

Timothy was instructed to “bear your share of hardship for the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:8). The blessing might be a gift, but it carried the responsibilities of discipleship. The voice from heaven told the disciples, “Listen to him” (Matthew 17:5). Being chosen by God or having seen the glory of Jesus calls for a change of mind and heart. This change isn’t easy to accomplish. It is the reason for penance. †

Sunday Readings

Genesis 12:1–4a

The LORD said to Abram...I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you.

2 Timothy 1:8b–10

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

Matthew 17:1–9

And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light.

While God’s marvelous blessings are free gifts, we are expected to use them for the common good.



A Word from Pope Francis

We have not seen with our own eyes the face of Jesus shining like the sun. However, we too were given the Word of Salvation, faith was given to us, and we have experienced the joy of meeting Jesus in different ways. Jesus also says to us: “Rise, and have no fear” (Matthew 17:7).

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What God-given blessings am I called to share today?
- How have others blessed me?

Share the Mission

By Fr. Daniel P. Horan, OFM

On March 24, 1980, Archbishop Óscar Romero of San Salvador was assassinated by those who wished to silence him for preaching the good news of justice and peace to his people who were being abused and oppressed by the government of El Salvador and the oligarchic class that supported it. Romero was not always such a courageous preacher, one unafraid to call out the injustices and crimes in his midst, but over time he became increasingly aware of the hardship that the gospel demanded in living an authentic Christian life—especially as the leader of the Church in San Salvador.

The hardship that the Second Letter to Timothy is talking about here is not reserved simply for official leaders in the Church like Archbishop Romero, but is instead a reality that all the baptized are called to embrace. Jesus says as much in the Gospels when he tells us that part of discipleship requires us to “take up [your] cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24) and that we may even have to “lay down [our] life” (John 15:13).

Archbishop Romero understood this and, in a homily a year before his martyrdom, said: “Because it is God’s work, we don’t fear the prophetic mission the Lord has entrusted to us...every baptized person has received a share in the prophetic mission of Christ” (July 8, 1979). He said we don’t do the difficult work of the gospel by living alone but with the strength that relies on the power of God. †



Run the Race

By Fr. Daniel P. Horan, OFM

As a longtime competitive runner, I really appreciate St. Paul’s metaphor about the Christian life of discipleship being like a race (1 Corinthians 9:24). Whereas St. Paul likely had in mind Greek athletics (think of the ancient Olympic

Games) where there is indeed a greater sense of competition—“the award goes to one person”—I would invite us to think of those community fun runs or even major modern events like the Boston Marathon instead. Indeed, some people run the race to win, but that is a comparatively small percentage of the population. Most people are out not to win an award but to enjoy the event itself.

The nice thing about road races as a metaphor for Christian living is that they include all people—fast runners, slow runners, walkers, spectators, and volunteers. Races are activities that involve all women and men moving as one community in the same direction toward a shared finish line.

Furthermore, they often involve many people cheering the participants from the sidelines. One might even think of this group as similar to the saints that intercede for us, cheer us on, and coach us toward our goal.

May this Lent be a time for us to consider where we are and how we participate in the race of Christian discipleship, moving with the community, and cheering one another onward toward the kingdom of God. †



So that the world may know you by our words and actions, we pray—Lord, let us be like you.

The Redemptorists

These reflections were excerpted from *Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Lent and Easter* by Fr. Daniel P. Horan, OFM, available from Liguori Publications. To learn more and review our complete list of Daybreaks authors, including Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI; Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR; Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA; and others, visit Liguori.org.

WEEKDAY READINGS

March 6–11

Monday, Lenten Weekday:
Dn 9:4b–10 / Lk 6:36–38


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

Wednesday, Lenten Weekday:
Jer 18:18–20 / Mt 20:17–28

Thursday, Lenten Weekday:
Jer 17:5–10 / Lk 16:19–31

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

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

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