



In A New Light

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Cycle A

Genesis 12:1-4a
2 Timothy 1:8b-10
Matthew 17:1-9

GATHERING

(An unlit candle rests on a table covered with purple cloth. Surrounding the candle are several different pictures of Jesus, along with pictures from magazines and newspapers of a variety of people from different backgrounds.)

This week, along with the three apostles, we see Jesus transfigured. It's a vision of the glory to come. As we journey with him through his passion, death and resurrection, we pray that our eyes be opened to his great love for us. Last week we began Lent by reflecting on our sinfulness as a forgetting of who we are. Name something you did this past week that expressed who you are as a child of God and disciple of Jesus. *(Members share briefly.)*

OPENING PRAYER

(As the session begins, the room is darkened somewhat. The leader calls the community to silent attention to the presence of God. After some minutes, the candle is lit. Lights are turned on as needed. Members join in singing "Heal Me Lord." The song may be found on the Internet. Following the song, the community prays as follows.)

Leader: During this time of reflection and prayer, may we begin to envision new and deeper relationships with God and others, made possible through the grace of Christ Jesus.

All: May God bless us with the grace of Christ Jesus. Amen.

Focus Question

Recall an experience of suddenly seeing someone you knew – or thought you knew – in a new and different light.

SCRIPTURE SHARING AND REFLECTION

Commentary

This week we encounter again the scene of Jesus transfigured on the mountain top. Rising dramatically as it does from the surrounding countryside, Mt. Tabor, the site traditionally associated with the transfiguration, is indeed a fitting place. This mountaintop scene stands in stark contrast with that of last week, where Jesus was alone on another high mountain, resisting Satan's temptation to be who he really was. Now, on this mountain, God proclaims and affirms Jesus' identity, echoing the words heard at his baptism, "This is my beloved son." (Matthew 3:17)

On this week's mountain top, Jesus is not alone. He is accompanied by three apostles, as he is suddenly transformed from their ordinary-looking leader into a being of radiant light. They hardly know what to do or say. Their utter amazement turns to fear as the voice from the cloud identifies Jesus as "my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Then the glorified vision is gone and Jesus resumes his normal appearance. Yet, they have seen him with new eyes, in a new light. Jesus appears as one who fulfills the law and the prophets, represented by Moses and Elijah, and he now leads the people of God in new and unimagined directions. How might this vision have changed or affirmed their relationship with Jesus, or challenged their understanding of who he is?

The scene of Jesus on the mountaintop, flanked by Moses and Elijah, serves not only to connect Jesus to the whole story of his people; it serves to situate him at its center. Jesus stands here as the ultimate meaning of God's story, of our story. How deeply do you appreciate Jesus as the ultimate meaning of your story?

We have many images of Jesus from scripture – wise teacher, compassionate healer, faithful shepherd, loving friend, suffering servant – as well as those from our own prayer experience. These images both comfort us and challenge us to grow in relationship with God. How might they help us to see God, ourselves, and others in a new light? From the judgment scene in Matthew 25 and from his many words throughout the gospel, we know that we are called to see others in the light in which Jesus sees them. We are called to act toward others as if they were Jesus. Yet, how often something impedes us from acting as God's beloved, from being a blessing for others who are also beloved of God!

There are so many relationships and situations in which blessing, healing and reconciliation are needed: with family, co-workers, strangers in our communities, others in the Church, and even God's creation. Lent calls us to grow beyond our easy certainties, judgments, doubts and fears in order to act differently! May our eyes and hearts grow more open throughout this Lenten season with the help of "the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began." (2 Tim. 1:10)

FAITH SHARING AND INTEGRATION

- ◆ As with Abram, God blesses us that we might be a blessing. How is your life a blessing to others?
- ◆ Imagine that Jesus touches you and says, "Do not be afraid." From what doubt, fear or anxiety do you most need to be freed?
- ◆ How does your relationship to God need to be transformed this Lent?
- ◆ What person or what group of people does God call you to see "in a new light"? Where do you need to see beyond misjudgments, failures, hurts or lack of seeing as God sees?
- ◆ How deeply do you appreciate Jesus as the ultimate meaning of your story?

RESPONSE IN ACTION

- ◆ Count your blessings and be one. Reach out with a healing touch to someone this week you know is lonely or in pain.

- ◆ Help others to see more clearly. Recycle old eyeglasses to help those here and overseas who cannot afford them. Drop them off at any optician's center that accepts such donations or contact the local Lions Club.
- ◆ It may not be on a mountaintop, but find a quiet place to be present to God for a half hour this week. Pray for someone with whom you have a difficult relationship. Strive to see him/her in a new light. Act accordingly.
- ◆ Look at immigrants "in a new light." Learn about the Catholic perspective on immigration issues. Visit www.justiceforimmigrants.org; or view the video, "Stranger No Longer."

SENDING FORTH AND CLOSING PRAYER

(The leader calls the community to some time of quiet. A selection of instrumental music is played. When the music is complete, the community prays as follows.)

Leader: May "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory ... give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him. May the eyes of [your] hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe..."

Ephesians 1:17-19

Lord, enlighten the eyes of our hearts.

All: May we come to know you more deeply during the seven weeks of Lent.

Leader: Lord, enlighten the eyes of our hearts.

All: May we come to see you more truly in all our sisters and brothers.

Leader:

All: Lord, enlighten the eyes of our hearts.

Leader: May we find ways to help our parish and the Church grow in faith and service.

All: Lord, enlighten the eyes of our hearts.

Leader: May your power work in us for healing and reconciliation in all relationships.

All: Lord, enlighten the eyes of our hearts.

Leader: Lord Jesus, may the radiant light of your transfigured glory enlighten the eyes of our hearts, now and always.

All: Amen.

(Members join hands to pray the Lord's Prayer.)

