



Archdiocese of San Antonio
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Second Sunday of Lent
March 16, 2014

Well, we've made it to the Second Sunday of our Lenten Season. How well are you doing with your penitential acts? Has it been easy or has it been difficult? Don't worry, this is a homily not confession, so you don't have to admit it if you have messed up already! But in seriousness, we know that we have a God of mercy and comfort, and he loves us even as we struggle with the disciplines of Lent. He loves us when we struggle with the disciplines of life.

St. Paul told Timothy something in his letter that applies to us here and now. He wrote, "Bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God." This is so important to remember, because hardships certainly come to us in this life. Everyone's hardships are different, but everyone has them.

Peter's hardships were probably very different from our own. Prior to the miracle of the Transfiguration we celebrate today, Peter had been struggling with Jesus' words. Jesus had told his disciples that he would suffer and die at the hands of those he came to save. So Peter – thinking he was being a good disciple – swore that he would never let that happen. Jesus rebuked him, telling him, "Get behind me Satan!" The Lord told him he was not thinking as God thinks, but as humans do. After that, Jesus started teaching the apostles that they would have to take up their crosses and follow him, deny themselves, and lay down their lives if they truly wanted to live. Peter was experiencing some very heavy burdens. He was struggling to understand how he was going to be able to follow his Messiah, when the cost was so high.

But then Jesus allowed him – along with James and John – to see his true glory. On the top of the mountain, Jesus was transfigured before them. His clothes were dazzling white, his face shone like the sun, and Moses and Elijah were there to meet him. Jesus showed them his glory, the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets, in the light of the resurrection that was to come. Peter was so excited that he did not want it to end. And, Peter had a habit of acting before taking the time to think and pray. He told Jesus that they could put up three tents, one for each of these servants of the Father. But just as these words left his mouth, the Father’s voice came out of the heavens: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased, listen to him.” And just like that, the glorious vision was over. It was just Peter, the two brothers James and John, and Jesus – just as he always looked, standing by themselves on a mountaintop. Peter must have been saddened by losing this beautiful vision of the glory to come, but he was given great wisdom by the Father: “This is my beloved Son, listen to him.”

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, while reflecting on the Transfiguration at the last World Youth Day in Rio, told the pilgrims that when the burdens of this life pile up on us, we must “Put on Christ.” If we can do this, if we can “place your trust in him,” we “will never be disappointed.” We must put on Christ. Peter learned this in the words of the Father – to listen to and trust Jesus, and this is what Paul told Timothy in his letter – to rely on the strength of Christ Jesus.

That glory of the Transfiguration did not last forever, Jesus and his disciples had to come back down that mountain. But the glory of the promise that God has made with us still shone in their hearts, and it can still shine in ours. We must simply put on Christ.

God made us a promise, when he told Abraham: “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing” (Gn). It is God’s will to bless us, not to curse us. The burdens of this life do exist, but they are nothing compared to God’s presence in our lives, nothing compared to the great promise our God has made to us.

What burdens do you carry with you today? Let the disciplines of this Lenten season teach you to lay them down. If you struggle with anxiety, or doubt, or your appetites, or your relationships, or your work, or your ability to love, none of these struggles can crush you. “Our soul waits for the Lord, who is our help and our shield”

(Ps). There is truly nothing that can overcome us if we are keeping our trust in the Lord. That of course is the challenge though, isn't it? We must keep our trust in the Lord, we must put on Christ.

So, let us join our voices with the psalmist today: "Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you!" May we remember the light that shone from your face on that mountain-top. It is true that we were not there, but that light shines in our hearts though the power of the Spirit that dwells within us. Give us the faith to see that light in the midst of all our burdens, Lord. Help us to bear our burdens with trust in you, remembering that we cannot be crushed, because you are with us.

May Mary, our beloved mother, pray for us so that we may never let go of our faith and hope in the God who loves us. May she help us maintain our trust in "our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim).