

2nd Sun Lent A

Introduction

We are in the midst of our Lenten *journey*.

This is a time of preparation for Holy Week, culminating in our celebration of Jesus' victory...Easter.

At Easter we will also renew our Baptismal vows – our commitment to our *call* to follow Jesus on the *journey* of our lives.

Refrain... Transfigure Us O Lord.

I Our Life's Call

Many times we are tempted to forget all about our *call* and our *journey* with the Lord.

Life's pressures, daily schedules, worries, problems... these all tend to clutter our lives.

We live in a culture which too often sends us messages that we are born, raised, get educated, get a job, get a family – maybe – retire, play golf and then die.

Along the way we are supposed to buy a lot of stuff which is supposed to make us happy and fulfill us. On life's *journey* we are *called* to be entertained consumers. That's what life is about.

For us Christians who are disciples of Jesus, life is something much more meaningful and adventurous and beautiful.

God *calls* on our *journey of life*, a *journey* from God and to God, in the footsteps of Jesus.

However, we are often tempted to forget this...

After all, we're just little people... our lives aren't majestic or memorable... we're not celebrities!

We don't make decisions that affect the world scene.

We're just trying to struggle along, be the kind of person God wants us to be...

Refrain... Transfigure Us O Lord.

II Transfiguration

In today's Gospel Jesus takes the leaders of the disciples – Peter, James and John – up a mountain to spend time with him.

(Spend time with Jesus – how important! I have a whole sermon on that in itself!)

While they are together Jesus is transformed before their eyes...

Peter begins to speak... he is utterly amazed... and he wants to build three condos up here, and remain awhile...

As Peter is jabbering away,
"a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him'."

Imagine that... God speaks... and tells Peter to *"listen to Jesus."*
Quit jabbering and just listen... pay attention... hear what Jesus has to say...
"Listen to him."

Do we ever just listen to Jesus?
Do we spend time with Jesus in prayer,
reading the stories about Jesus,
listening to his words and teachings?
Do we take time getting to know Jesus?

What is your favorite story about Jesus?

*Maybe it's the story of the Good Samaritan,
Or the story of the Prodigal son,
or the Samaritan woman at the well,
or the healing of the man born blind,*

*or the raising of Lazarus...
or maybe the crucifixion,
or the resurrection.*

What is your favorite image of Jesus?

*Maybe it's the Good Shepherd – a favorite image from the earliest times of Jesus' disciples...
or Jesus as friend of people who suffer,
or Jesus the healer,
or Jesus the prophet,
or Jesus the loving friend of Mary and Martha and Lazarus.*

What words of Jesus move you?

*Maybe it's the Beatitudes,
or Jesus proclaiming "I am the shepherd,"
or "I have to come to bring life."*

Edward Leen was a wonderful spiritual author in the 1950s. In his book **In the Likeness of Christ** he suggested that we need to go thru a three step process when we talk about the place of Jesus in our lives.

- 1. We need to admire Christ*
- 2. Admiration leads to love and devotion towards Christ*
- 3. Love and devotion beget imitation... imitating Christ in thought, emotion and volition. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. (Jn 14:23)*

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III Our Behavior

If we are God's people, God's family, Jesus' disciples –
if that's where we belong,

From the Desk of Donald Ware, C.P.

and if we are spending time with Jesus and getting to know Jesus, and if we "listen to him"...

something begins to happen within our hearts...
within our lives...

we begin to change...
how we view life changes,
how we react to situations changes,
how we treat people changes...

We are not so self-centered and self-pampered...
because we begin to realize that life is not just about us...

We realize that we don't always have to prove ourselves...
and be number one all of the time,
and be in control all of the time..
because we are loved by God...

We don't always have to be perfect and have the right answers...
because we are not God, but we are God's beloved...

We aren't so burdened by worries and fears so much...
because we begin to realize that we are not in charge... God is.

We begin to have more peace of mind and heart.
We become more aware that Jesus, our Good Shepherd,
is present at our side each step of our journey, every day.

Psalms 23 takes on more meaning for us...
The Lord is my Shepherd...
we might even start off our day with that Psalm.

How we act each day also begins to change...
not necessarily drastically at first,
but with little steps, in small ways...

Notice...
we are becoming transfigured,
we are becoming transformed,
we are becoming more like Jesus!

And Jesus is now sending us down from the mountain to enter into our world,

We who are more Christ-like,
more a son and daughter of our loving Father.

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IV Story... A Late Start

There was a wealthy couple in Dallas who had really struggled with teaching their children what it means to follow Jesus. Their kids had become so accustomed to others meeting their needs that the idea of "serving" sounded like something from the Middle Ages... or Mars.

The father in that family realized he was getting a late start, but hey, it was better than no start at all!

A week or so before the holidays he said to his family, "We're going to do something different this Thanksgiving."

His teens sat up and listened. Usually when he said things like that it meant something exotic...like parasailing in the Bahamas.

But not this time. "We're going to go down to the mission and we're going to serve Thanksgiving dinner to some poor and homeless people."

"We're going to what?"

"Come on, dad, you're kidding... aren't you? Tell us you're kidding."

He wasn't. They went along with it because of his firm insistence, but no one was happy about it. For some reason their dad had "gotten weird" and apparently it was something he just had to get out of his system. Serving at the mission... What if their friends heard about it?

No one could have predicted what happened that day.

No one in the family could remember when they had a better time together. They hustled around the kitchen, dished up turkey and dressing, sliced pumpkin pie and refilled countless coffee cups.

They clowned around with little kids and listened to old folks tell stories of Thanksgiving long ago and far away.

The dad in the family was thoroughly pleased (would you believe stunned?) by the way his kids responded.

But nothing could have prepared him for their request a few weeks later.

"Dad... we want to go back to the mission and serve Christmas dinner!"

And they did. As the kids hoped, they met some of the same people they'd become acquainted with at Thanksgiving.
One needy family in particular had been on their minds, and they all lit up when they saw them back in the chow line again. Since that time, the families have had several contacts. The pampered teens have rolled up their sleeves more than once to serve a family from one of Dallas's poorer neighborhoods. There was a marked but subtle change in them too. The kids didn't seem to be taking things for granted anymore. Their parents found them more serious... more responsible. Yes, it was a late start. But it was a start. It was the Transfiguration of that Christian Family. What an adventure. What an experience of meaning. What a beautiful world they grew into.

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Conclusion

My brothers and sisters, as we continue with this Eucharist we ask our loving Father to transform us.
We have listened to our gospel story.
We now offer ourselves together with Jesus to our Father.
We once again remember the Last Supper and Calvary where Jesus gave his body and blood to bring us from darkness into his own beautiful light.
We will be fed with this very body and blood of Jesus.

We pray...

Transform us Lord, transfigure us into your own likeness so that we may walk in your footsteps and bring your love and compassion and forgiveness and peace into our world which is so in need of this.