

Homily for the 2nd Sunday of Lent

Last week, as we began our Lenten journey, I tried to give you the “big picture” of Lent – what it’s all about. In particular, I said the first part of Lent focuses on compunction – a word which means remorse, or sorrow for our sins. And so, in a special way during these 40 days, we slow down a bit, and focus on the truth that we’re all sinners. But do we just wallow in the sad state of affairs that we’re sinners? No. Rather, the Church invites us to repent of these sins. And by asking God to forgive us – above all in the Sacrament of Reconciliation – we are able to personally experience God’s mercy upon us.

But, this is only the first part of Lent. The second action, which flows from compunction, is conversion. Conversion, as I said, literally means turning back to God. And so, when we turn away from our sinful past, we’re free to turn back to God and more faithfully follow Jesus. And, as Jesus has done for us, so are we to do for one another. In other words, as Jesus has lavished the Father’s mercy upon us, forgiving the debt of our sins, so are we called to extend that mercy to others. As I said last week, a special way we can do this is through the Corporal Works of Mercy. Don’t forget your homework assignment!

That was last week – the big picture of Lent. This week, I want to give you the motivation for why to delve into this compunction and conversion in the first place. And it all has to do with love. If you hurt someone that you love, you feel bad for what you've done (compunction), and you ask pardon and show gratitude for that forgiveness (conversion). Well, the same is true in our relationship with God. Why should we have compunction for our sins, and then repent, so that we can more fully convert and become more like Jesus? Because we love God. But do we? Do you really love God?

Today, I'd like to do something a little different to help us explore having this loving relationship with God through something we call a guided meditation. This is going to be a little different for a homily, but just trust me. We're going to enter into the scene that unfolds before us in today's Gospel, which we call the Transfiguration.

So, let's begin. Go ahead and relax. Close your eyes if you're comfortable. Allow all the distractions to go out of your head. Just still yourself. Breathe in and hold. Breathe out. Be still, and relax. Breathe in and hold. Breathe out. And now... imagine that you have been journeying with Jesus for some time. You, along with the Disciples and a huge crowd, have been walking all over with Jesus seeing Him cure the sick and preach the truth of God's Kingdom. Then one day, early in the morning, Jesus invites you to join Him, along with Peter, James, and John on a side trip. He leads you up a high mountain. Look around as you ascend on your way up, with Jesus leading the way. *Pause*

You've now reached the summit of the mountain. Pause to catch your breath. Look around in all directions at the peaceful countryside on this beautiful day. Imagine what it might look like. Imagine what Peter, James, and John, along with Jesus, might be feeling as they look around. What are you feeling? *Pause*

Then, something unexpected catches your eye. There's a strange brightness coming from Jesus; and you can't take your eyes off Him. His face is shining bright as the sun. His clothes are so white. You've never seen anything like this. Two others are talking with Jesus. Who are they? What does all this mean? What is happening within you as you gaze upon this vision? *Pause*

Peter's voice then suddenly interrupts your thoughts. He's saying something to Jesus about Moses and Elijah and three tents. You can tell that he saw what you've seen. But while he's speaking, a bright cloud appears right above Jesus and you hear a voice saying very loudly, "This is my chosen Son; listen to Him." You fall to the ground. All of this is too much for you. What are you feeling as you hide your face? *Pause*

As you lay face down on the ground, you soon feel the gentle touch of a hand upon your head. You hear Jesus telling you, "Rise and do not be afraid." You look up slowly to see only Jesus. The cloud is gone and the bright light is gone from Jesus' face and His clothes. He looks just like you again. How does it feel to be touched by Jesus? How does it feel to hear Him say to you, "Do not be afraid"?

Pause

As you look up at Jesus, you recall the voice from the cloud: “This is my chosen Son; listen to Him.” What do these words say to you about Jesus, and about your relationship with Him? How do you listen to Jesus? When do you listen to Jesus? Feel free to share your honest thoughts with Him now. *Pause*

How does Jesus respond to you? Is there something you’d like to ask of Him? Ask Him. Then listen to Him. *Pause*

It’s time for you to begin the walk back down the mountain to return to where you are right now. Say goodbye to Jesus, Peter, James, and John. Leave them on the mountain top for now, knowing that you can always return to where you left off next time you’re with Jesus in prayer. Say thank you.

It’s time to reenter this space. Come back gently. Open your eyes. And remember.

Adapted From: <http://www.guidedprayer.org/> and <https://www.avemariapress.com>