



Things to Ponder

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Pastor's Note – Second Sunday of Lent – Matthew 17:1-9

Dear Parish Family,

The German language provides a word that describes vividly the unique event of the *Transfiguration*: “*augenblick*.” Literally, it might be translated as “*blink of an eye*.” The Greeks might use the word *kairos* to describe that sacred encounter. Time, as we know it (*chronos*) seems to stand still. The *mountain* has represented for various cultures a place of spiritual awakening or encounter with God. Moses ascended the *mountain* of God at Sinai to receive the *LAW*. Elijah escaped to the *mountain of God* at Horeb to experience the *tiny whispering sound* or *wind* that communicated God's presence. The weary desert nomad could occasionally ascend a *mountain* to gain *perspective* and *direction* on the long journey across that arid land. Thus, today we come to the *mountain* to gain *perspective* as well and *hope* on our journey through Lent.

We are asked first to consider our ancestor *Abram*. He was the leader of a huge clan of nomadic shepherds whose lifestyle was similar to that of present-day Bedouin Arabs. They lived somewhere between northwest Iraq and southeast Turkey. Abram was asked by God to transplant his entire clan to “*a land that will show you...*” (Genesis 12, 1) Abram is revered as the common ancestor of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Although each places a slightly different emphasis and interpretation on the *call* of Abram, all give credence to it. Muslims, in particular, are awed by Abram's *submission to the will of Allah* (God). The *journey* theme is appropriate for us not only during Lent, but especially as we reflect upon our personal and communal lives at this point in history. How did we get where we are? Whose *will* have we been following? Where is God directing us now? The unique aspect of the Christian response to God's invitation is that our path must always be *in, with, and through Christ*! As we heard in today's second reading:

***“[God] has saved us and called us
to a holy life not according to our
works but according to his own
design and the grace bestowed
on us in Christ Jesus...”
(2 Timothy 1, 9)***

In the second week of his *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius of Loyola has the one on retreat turn from a focus on *self-knowledge* to that of *knowing Jesus*. Knowledge is one of the *gifts of the Holy Spirit*; but its experience is not so much *of the mind* as it is *of the heart*. Knowing Christ implies establishing a deeply personal relationship with Christ as brother and Savior. Father Thomas Green describes it in these words:

***“So the second week is really the heart of the
retreat... We never know the Lord fully;
we are never totally possessed by him
until we are transformed and confirmed
in grace. For this reason the process***

of putting on Jesus is a life-time process.”
(Green, A Vacation With The Lord, p. 81)

We discover again every Lent that the only way to the vision of God and *peace* in our hearts is to identify with Christ in every way: in his *compassion*, his *self-sacrifice*, his *zeal* for justice, his *willingness to take a risk* for others, his *longing* for the Father, and his *gift of self* on the cross! Spend some time with him this week and ask yourselves this **question: “What transformation is going on inside of you”**

Yours in Christ,

Father William Foley

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