

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On this Second Sunday of Lent, we celebrate Transfiguration Sunday. We see the revelation of Jesus to his disciples in his glory, a foretaste or foreshadowing of his glory in heaven. The language that Luke uses to describe this scene is rich soil for our Lenten reflection. He says that Jesus went up the mountain with Peter, James, and John. Ascending the mountain connotes an ascent to a holy place, holy ground where one communes with God. Luke then describes how the disciples were overcome with sleep. This harkens back to another dramatic scene in salvation history when the disciples were overcome with sleep. In the Garden at Gethsemane, where Jesus had asked his disciples to stand sentry with him, they fell asleep.

This experience can also be a metaphor for us in our spiritual lives: to not be attentive to how the Lord is speaking to us of the implications of the costs of our own discipleship. We can sometimes be asleep and not aware and present to how the Lord's grace and spirit is working in our lives. When the disciples "become fully awake" they are face to face with God's glory. Jesus speaks to them of his leaving this earthly life to enter into his Father's glory. The path to that glory will be wrought with danger, intense suffering, and death. Peter says, "Master, it is good that we are here." Peter is basking in the glory of Jesus Christ but also senses the power and connectivity with Moses and Elijah, two persons in Jewish history who had a profound relationship with God. This is a moment of deliverance: the promise that God made to Moses that He would deliver his people from the slavery of their captors comes full circle in the person of Jesus Christ.

Peter, naturally overcome with emotion at the scene revealed before him, does not want this scene to come to an end. He proposes to erect three tents: one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus. Again, he does not yet understand what Jesus is communicating to him and his companions. Then, amidst all of this light, the Father admonishes them: "***This is my chosen Son; listen to him.***" Thus, the road to glory is not going to be easy! Saint Thomas Aquinas wrote that "For a person to go straight along the road, he must have some knowledge of the end—just as an archer will not shoot an arrow straight unless he sees first the target... This is particularly necessary if the road is hard and rough, the going heavy, and the end delightful." [St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 3.q.45, a.1.].

This Thomistic insight helps to frame in a simple and concise way the very essence of the Lenten experience. We are called not to pitch our tents and bask in the comfortable and easy aspects of our faith but to look beyond to the ultimate prize: light beyond darkness, life beyond death. To keep our eyes firmly affixed upon this reality will help us to grapple with the necessary darkness and losses of this earthly life and to keep walking our pilgrim's way to the promise of eternal life. I found an example of this idea in a most unexpected place. In the Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the Sporting Green in the San Francisco Chronicle, columnist Ron Krichick is describing Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson. He writes, "This season's home stretch offers a fresh, formidable challenge to the understated tone Curry and Thompson established in launching this powerhouse. They are reserved by nature, leaders by example, not prone to demonstrative outbursts. The way Thompson and Curry carry themselves is important. They tend to show humility when the Warriors are rolling and patience when they're struggling..." Good food for thought as we continue our journey this holy season!