



FAITH CIRCLES

WEEKLY SMALL
GROUP CATECHESIS

2ND SUNDAY OF LENT • YEAR A



SUNDAY GOSPEL

Being Transformed

Matthew 17:1-9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud

overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!' When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, 'Get up and do not be afraid.' And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, 'Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.' ■

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Pope Francis

Today the Gospel presents the Transfiguration. It is the second stage of the Lenten journey. The mountain in the Bible represents a place close to God and an intimate encounter with Him, a place of prayer where one stands in the presence of the Lord. There up on the mount, Jesus is revealed to the three disciples as transfigured, luminescent and most beautiful. Suddenly from on high the voice of the Father resounds proclaiming Jesus to be his most beloved Son, saying "listen to him". This word is important! Our Father said this to these Apostles, and says it to us as well: "listen to Jesus, because he is my beloved Son". This week let us keep this word in our minds and in our hearts: "listen to Jesus!"

This invitation from the Father is very important. We, the disciples of Jesus, are called to be people who listen to his voice and take his words seriously. To listen to Jesus, we must be close to him, to follow him, like the crowd in the Gospel who chase him through the streets of Palestine. Jesus did not have a teaching post or a fixed pulpit, he was an itinerant teacher, who proposed his teachings, teachings given to him by the Father, along the streets, covering distances that were not

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always predictable or easy. Follow Jesus in order to listen to him. But also let us listen to Jesus in his written Word, in the Gospel.

I pose a question to you: do you read a passage of the Gospel every day? Yes, no!. It is important! It is so good; it is a good thing to have a small book of the Gospel, a little one, and to carry in our pocket or in our purse and read a little passage in whatever moment presents itself during the day. In any given moment of the day I take the Gospel from my pocket and I read something, a short passage. Jesus is there and he speaks to us in the Gospel! Ponder this.

From the event of the Transfiguration I would like to take two significant elements

that can be summed up in two words: ascent and descent. We all need to go apart, to ascend the mountain in a space of silence, to find ourselves and better perceive the voice of the Lord. This we do in prayer. But we cannot stay there! Encounter with God in prayer inspires us anew to “descend the mountain” and return to the plain where we meet many brothers weighed down by fatigue, sickness, injustice, ignorance, poverty both material and spiritual.

To these brothers in difficulty, we are called to bear the fruit of that experience with God, by sharing the grace we have received. And this is curious.

When we hear the Word of Jesus, when we listen to the Word of Jesus and carry it in our heart, this Word

grows. Do you know how it grows? By giving it to the other! The Word of Christ grows in us when we proclaim it, when we give it to others! And this is what Christian life is.

It is a mission for the whole Church, for all the baptized, for us all: listen to Jesus and offer him to others.

Do not forget: this week listen to Jesus! And think about the matter of the Gospel: will you? Will you do this? Then next Sunday you tell me if you have done this: that you have a little book of the Gospel in your pocket or in your purse to read in little stages throughout the day. ■

TALKING POINTS

1. This week's Gospel tells of the disciples' 'mountain-top' experience, where they encountered Jesus personally and were impacted by the reality of who He is. Discuss times when you have encountered the person of Jesus and been impacted by Him. What affect did it have on you?
2. Pope Francis explains the significance of both the 'ascent' and the 'descent' in our relationship with God – both our encounter with God on the mountain-top and our going back down to share it with people. How can you share the impact of your encounters with Jesus more freely with others in your daily life?

PRAYER POINTS

Pray for each other: Ask about and pray for the needs of the group members. Individuals might pray for themselves or ask someone else to pray for them.

Reflect: Spend some time quietly reflecting on your encounters with Jesus in your life, letting them renew your love for God in your heart.

Response: *Holy Spirit, help us listen to Jesus.*

Closing Prayer: Loving Father, thank you for sending your beloved Son Jesus to encounter us in our humanity. Help us to live lives that share the joy and mystery of who you are.

