



Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday of Lent (A)

March 8, 2020

The Glory We Are Called To

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Raphael's greatest painting, *The Transfiguration*, depicts today's Gospel account. Raphael loved this painting so much he never sold it. He hung the painting over his bed, and at his death he turned to look at it.

The transfiguration of the Lord reminds us of the glory we are all called to even when that glory is hidden. When God called Abraham, it was to make of him a great nation and to give him glory. But Abraham had to leave what he had and enter into the unknown to receive

what was promised. We, too, need to set out and leave our expectations if we ever hope to enter the mysteries of faith and discover the reward we are searching for. Setting out and leaving behind are like little "deaths" that prepare us for the glory of salvation.

The Father revealed Jesus' glory to his three closest apostles so their faith would survive the cross. God didn't want them to become disillusioned or frightened by his suffering and death. A voice came down from heaven and confirmed Jesus as the Son to assure the apostles that even if he didn't seem like the Messiah in his human nature, he most certainly was.

It was this image of the glorified Jesus that Raphael reflected on and labored over for years. He needed to see this transfiguration during his life and at the hour of his death to keep the faith. So do we. +

A Word from Pope Francis

The event of the Lord's transfiguration offers us a message of hope—thus shall we be, with him. It invites us to encounter Jesus, to be at the service of our brothers and sisters.

—Angelus, August 6, 2017



Sunday Readings

Genesis 12:1–4a

The LORD said to Abram...I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you.

2 Timothy 1:8b–10

He 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.

Matthew 17:1–9

And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light.

We need to set out and leave our expectations if we ever hope to enter the mysteries of faith.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What images and objects around my house or workplace remind me of my faith?
- How can I be a sign of the glory to which we are called?

The Church: Catholic All Along

By Fr. Thomas Richstatter, OFM

When I think *Catholic*, I think big. The Catholic Church is a big Church: big numbers (more than one billion members) spread all over the globe and big buildings—cathedrals and basilicas—with big parking lots.

But before we get carried away with too much of this external bigness, it might be good to remember that the Church was Catholic already at the first Pentecost, before there were any big cathedrals, parking lots, or a billion members. The Church was Catholic even when the disciples could all gather in one house.

Catholic implies big or universal—not just on the outside but big on the inside. Catholic is a mark of the inner nature of the Church. The Church is Catholic because it is all-embracing. The Catholic Church is the sacrament, the outward sign of a God who is Catholic, a God who is all-embracing and wants to share the one eternal banquet with people of every race, language, and way of life.

The Church is Catholic because, like God, it is not limited to one country or culture. In ancient times it was able to move from its Aramaic/Palestinian origins and adopt the language and culture of Greece to preach God's message. It then expressed itself in Syriac and spread to India and beyond. It



expressed itself in Coptic and spread to Egypt and throughout Africa. It adopted Roman customs and Latin language into its rituals. It employed Greek philosophy to explain its beliefs. It used the Roman legal system to organize its hierarchical structure. The Church is Catholic because it can take whatever is good in

disparate cultures and embrace it as its own.

A World of Disciples

The Catholic Church is not limited to one interpretation of what it means to be a disciple. When people, moved by the Holy Spirit, decide to live the gospel in a unique way, they don't have to start a new Church. The Catholic Church has room for a Benedict of Nursia, a Francis of Assisi, an Angela Merici, to name a few. There are many ways to live the gospel within the Church. That's what makes it Catholic.

Just think of the diverse groups that may exist within your own parish: Daughters of Isabella, Knights of Columbus, Opus Dei, St. Vincent de Paul Society, for example. It's a big Church. It's a *Catholic* Church.

But what happens when our Catholic Church embraces people we don't like or don't agree with. (For example, most Catholics would have difficulties with

at least one of the organizations listed above.) When this big, all-embracing Catholic Church welcomes people who don't think like I do, and when I have to worship with people different from me, I sometimes wonder if it would be better to belong to a little church where everyone is more alike.

Growing, Becoming

Being Catholic isn't always comfortable. It stretches me to think new, bigger thoughts. Our Church is not the place for narrow minds or one-issue religion. And this has been a problem from day one.

Jesus himself was too Catholic for some of his contemporaries. He dined with the wrong people, cured the wrong people, and made friends with the wrong people. His Catholicity was a scandal because his embrace was so inclusive that he shed his blood for all.

Being Catholic is not only a mark of pride, it is a challenge. Catholic is not only something that the church is. It is something the Church continually strives to *become*. +



Lord, open my ears to hear your invitation to listen to your Son in the Word of God and my heart to discern what it means to be your humble servant.

—From *Mindful Meditations for Every Day of Lent and Easter*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

March 9–14

Monday, Lenten Weekday:

Dn 9:4b–10 / Lk 6:36–38

Tuesday, Lenten Weekday:

Is 1:10, 16–20 / Mt 23:1–12

Wednesday, Lenten Weekday:

Jer 18:18–20 / Mt 20:17–28

Thursday, Lenten Weekday:

Jer 17:5–10 / Lk 16:19–31

Friday, Lenten Weekday: Gn 37:3–4,

12–13a, 17b–28a / Mt 21:33–43, 45–46

Saturday, Lenten Weekday:

Mi 7:14–15, 18–20 / Lk 15:1–3, 11–32

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