

Dear Parishioners,

We've all met individuals in our lives who we could say are a stick-in-the-mud. Earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, or twenty-foot waves couldn't move them. Content and satisfied, they stay put doing the same things, eating the same foods, and / or watching the same TV shows. Often these individuals have few friends. However, for most of us, our natural instinct is to move on ... searching for new experiences, new possibilities, and new challenges. Peter, in this weekend's Gospel, is acting like a stick-in-the-mud. His first response to Jesus' transfigured glory is to simply stay put. "*Lord, it is good that we are here.*" He wants to erect tents and he wants to stay on the mountain top. Jesus, quite simply, has other plans.

Yes, when Jesus takes His three closest disciple friends "*up a high mountain*" and is "*transfigured before them,*" the disciples are eager to stay. But when the voice from heaven announces who Jesus is and commands them to "*listen to Him,*" their mood shifts ... they become afraid. Why are they afraid? Because listening to Jesus means not staying put. It means moving onward into the unknown (see this weekend's First Reading – Gn 12:1-4a). The destiny is Transfiguration, but the journey is a costly one.

The First Reading is about venturing forth and the cost to Abram – kinsfolk and homeland. Abram is commanded by God to leave his homeland and to live on a promise of future blessing. Abram lives on a promise. So do we. This promise does more than better the condition of humankind. It offers us a share in divine life. It does have its cost. We must **listen** to Jesus. We must **follow** Him. We must carry forth His saving mission, even when it leads to Jerusalem. The radiance of the Transfiguration of Jesus overwhelms the disciples and even makes the greatness of Moses and Elijah – symbols for the law and the prophets – pale in comparison. Yet the call of God to us is the same as that to Abram and to Peter, to James, and to John ... be willing to leave everything to go where God wills. Be willing **to listen** to Jesus. Be willing **to learn** His ways. Be willing **to embrace** His journey.

Our journey as disciples leads us to eternal glory – foreshadowed by Jesus' Transfiguration. This is worth any cost. In comparison to the glory that God offers us in Christ, the offering of our lives as disciples is puny in comparison. All we need to do is listen to Jesus.

Jesus commands the disciples to "*Rise, and do not be afraid.*" The journey of discipleship has its dangers (temptations), but we still venture forth on the journey to eternal glory. We trust in God's guidance (given through the law, the prophets, the teaching of Jesus, Gospel-living modeled by others, etc.) and surrender ourselves into God's hands. All we need to do is **listen**.

Listening to God can come through the readings and homily given on Sunday. It can come through our practice of taking some time every day to read God's Word in Scripture. It might come through the good modeling of discipleship by another. It might come through the guidance we seek in spiritual direction. It might come through the disciplines we choose for Lent. There are many ways God makes known the divine will for us. ***Listening*** means all of these things but, most important, it means that we keep our eyes focused on the vision of Jesus transfigured and know that God, in His great love and His divine mercy, intends that we share in that same glory. We must never lose sight of Jesus Himself.

May Saint Michael the Archangel defend, guide, protect, and intercede for us always!

~ Fr. Larry