

Lent 2, 07

1. As you know, yesterday was not a very nice day. But when I said that to someone, he told me that he looked at it as a free car-wash day. Isn't that a positive way of looking at things? Isn't that a nice way of making lemonade out of lemons. Would that we could all be so positive in our outlooks, and not only regarding the weather but also regarding our personal lives. And when we really think of it, isn't that the only way to handle a bad day or a bad situation? We have to try to find something good in them.

2. Maybe this kind of thinking stands behind today's Gospel which is the story about Jesus' transfiguration. According to MT, Mk and Lk this scene comes six or eight days after Jesus has first told his disciples that he is going to go up to Jerusalem where he will have to suffer many things at the hands of the elders, scribes and chief priests and even be killed. Therefore, we could see this present scene of the Lord's transfiguration as a balance to this gloomy prediction of suffering and death. We could interpret it as an attempt to give the disciples hope after some very bad news.

3. If that is the case, it is something we can easily understand. As someone has said, we humans can only stand so much reality, and

the word reality in this context means bad news. We have to look for hope on rainy days in our lives. Perhaps this is also behind the choice of this Gospel for the second Sunday of Lent. For Lent could be interpreted as bad news, despite the fact that the prefaces of the Mass for Lent describe it as a joyful season, for Lent starts off with the liturgy of Ash Wednesday which reminds us of our sinfulness and mortality. “Turn from sin and be faithful to the Gospel,” or “Remember that you are dust and into dust you shall return,” are the two formulas used when we receive ashes. Not happy thoughts. Perhaps, then, the church liturgy puts this scene of the Transfiguration on the second Sunday of Lent to pick us up, after bad news, to give us hope despite our sinfulness and mortality.

4. In any case, the scene itself is one of promise. There is a touch of gloom in it because, despite the glory which surrounds Jesus in his transfigured state, the subject of his conversation with Moses and Elijah is his “exodus,” that is, his own death. But that gloomy future is now placed in the context of Jesus’ transfiguration, which is itself a preview of his future resurrection. So let us take our cue from this context. No matter how bad the weather is in our lives, we must see it as temporary, as passing, as something that has to

be put within the context of our future transfiguration, our future resurrection.

5. The ending of today's Gospel is its most important part. When the disciples emerge from their cloud of fright, they see no one but Jesus. Then they hear a voice which says to them: "This is my chosen Son; listen to him." Our Christian faith promises us resurrection, which is a transfiguration of our lives, of our selves, into a new kind of living, one which the Scriptures describe in many ways, one of which is very simple but very telling: All our tears will be wiped away. Oh what an image! Imagine God moving along a long line of people with a handkerchief in his hand, wiping away the tears from every single human face. But how do we get to this final state? The ending to this Gospel answers that question. Jesus is the way to get there. The disciples see Jesus all alone, and God's voice says to them: "This is my son; listen to him." But how do we listen to him? By listening to what the church teaches, for her teachings summarize the witness of those who have gone before us in faith. By reading the Gospels which tell us about Jesus, for not to know them is not to know Jesus. And, finally, by listening to our conscience which is God's voice, so Jesus' voice, speaking to our hearts.

6. May we listen well! If we do, we will be transformed, transfigured. Indeed, even our rainy days will be transformed, transfigured.