

## Homily for the Second Sunday of Lent

I had *lots* of help with my homily this week.

Last Wednesday, about a *hundred people* showed up at our Lenten Bible Study to help me with my homily! (guess they thought I could use the help... anyway, I'm sure glad they showed up and want to let everyone know that we will be doing a similar kind of program this coming week after the 6:30 PM on Wednesday. It's bi-lingual and everyone is welcome.)

What did we do?

Well, we read the story of the Transfiguration and then opened the floor for reactions, ideas and questions.

With a hundred people there, it was like opening the floodgates!

Thoughts and experiences and memories gushed out like water from a fire hydrant!

Here are just a few examples:

- One of the high school kids zeroed in on St Peter who wanted to set up tents on some mountain peak. So, the kid said he could relate to that. And talked about the good times he's had camping with his family at Red River, NM.
- One of the high school girls zeroed in on the Lord's admonition: "Don't tell anyone about this." It reminded her of a teacher telling students that they must not, under any circumstances, tell other students the questions on the STARR test.
- Some of the adults heard the reference made the end of the reading to "rising from the dead." Their thoughts immediately went to friends and relatives who are no longer with us.
- Someone in the Hispanic group talked about the long road that led the disciples to this mountain,

and the faith and the courage those same apostles would need  
to climb the next mountain,  
the one called Calvary.

- A man in the English-speaking group mentioned the cloud of darkness  
that overshadowed the apostles.  
Then when on to talk about how often his own life  
is “cloud-covered,” that is to say, overshadowed by worries and preoccupations.

Just few of the personal reactions elicited by today’s passage from the Gospel according to  
Mark.

Then, someone happened to mention the most important words of all.  
The words of God the Father echoing down from the heavens:  
THIS IS MY SON. LISTEN TO HIM.

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Listen to Him.

That’s not an easy thing to do, is it?

Even if you *want* to.

Even if you *try* to.

It is very hard and very difficult  
to listen to the Lord and discern his voice  
in a world like ours.

A world that is full of noise and distraction,  
i-phones and i-pads,  
news media and social media.

It makes you wonder:  
What *would* it be like  
to actually hear the Lord speaking to us.

And, if He were to do so?  
What would He say?

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Regardless of how much we might *want* to hear God speak to us  
in a clear and recognizable way,  
we need to have an internal “receiver”  
that is tuned to the voice of God.

If you are a religious person  
and if you are sincere in your faith,  
you some of the practical steps you need to take  
to keep that “receiver” in working order.

You need to:

- Plan ahead
- Find a quiet place
- Open your mind...open your Bible...open your heart.

What else can you do?

You might want to try some “stretching” exercises.

They also yield good results.

When I say by “stretching exercises,” I mean stretching in a literal sense,  
as in *stretching* out your arm and *reaching*:

- *Reaching* for your rosary
- *Reaching* for Holy Communion
- *Reaching* for the hand of your spouse

as you say the words:

“I’m sorry. I need you. I love you. Pray with me.”

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On Ash Wednesday, we began the season of Lent with this passage from the Bible:  
*If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

Today, on the Second Sunday of Lent, we hear the same the message,  
only stronger:

*A voice came from the cloud saying, “This is my Son. Listen to Him.”*

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So, how do we respond?

Well, we can't respond to the Word of God  
if we are not listening to hear  
the Word of God.

How do we know when God is actually speaking to us?

The only way we ever know  
is when we quiet our hearts...  
quiet them long enough to listen  
beneath the beating of the heart  
to the *longing* of the heart.

Only then will we be able to hear Christ calling us...

Calling us to climb a mountain.  
Calling us to take a risk and take a stand.

Calling us into His Presence.

Calling us back to the Church,  
back to the Sacraments,  
back to the Word,  
where God waits,  
where God patiently waits,  
where God always and forever waits  
to hear us say,

with the enthusiasm of young Samuel, the prophet:  
*Here I am, Lord. Reporting for duty!*

With the courage of a young girl named Mary:  
*I am the handmaid of the Lord.*  
*Let it be done unto me according to your word!*

With the astonishment of a guy named Peter, proclaiming at the top of his lungs:  
*Lord, it is good,*  
*it is so good to be here!*

If you want to hear the Lord speak,  
you need to go to a place where you can hear Him.

That place is inside you.  
That place is your heart.  
It is deep in your heart.

And nowhere else.