

Notes from the Liturgist...

The Transfiguration and the Cross (Lent)

We are now in the Second Sunday of Lent, and in the Gospel, we read the story of the Transfiguration of the Lord. We hear this Gospel account twice in the Church's Liturgical calendar: on the Solemnity of the Transfiguration of the Lord and on the Second Sunday of Lent. In the Gospel, the scene can help us to hold on to the church's belief in Christ as a true man and true God.

The Transfiguration is related to Our Lord's Baptism. When the Lord was baptized by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan River, it was an initiation that pushed Him from His hidden life (as fully divine) to begin His public ministry (as a fully human). The Transfiguration is a passage way on which Jesus crosses from His public ministry to His suffering and death. Jesus' "Passover" is His suffering and death.

In Lent, the Church's longing is to encourage us pilgrim people to renew our efforts to reject sin and live a life that God wants us to be so that we may attain holiness. The relation between Lent and the Transfiguration points to our efforts to overpower sin and grow in holiness so that we may come to share in the glory of the Lord Jesus' Resurrection.

The Transfiguration of the Lord is a great reminder for all of us pilgrims the effect of the cross to humankind. The sufferings of our Lord on the cross transformed the lives of every people. When we truly carry our cross as true disciples of Jesus, we benefit from that transformation.

My dear friends, this liturgy of the Second Sunday of Lent gives us motivation and inspiration in order to continue carrying our cross in this journey towards the mountain of Easter. Yes, it is not easy to die to self and carry our heavy cross. However, through the Gospel this Second Sunday of Lent, it whispers to every pilgrim that our cross will always lead us to the transformation of our lives.

There are three transformations or transfigurations that go along our journey towards eternity. First is, we are transfigured at baptism. "Through Baptism, we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God. The immersion into the water symbolizes our burial into Christ's death, from which he rises up by resurrection with him, as a new creature" (CCC). Second is, when we conquer our trials and challenges in life. In our suffering in this darkness of our lives is an opportunity to grow. There is no happiness without suffering and through that suffering, we are transfigured, we are transformed. The third is when we encounter death. Death is the final stage of a man towards the eternal transformation. Death is a gateway to attain the remarkable transformation, which is life eternal in heaven.

This Lenten season reminds us to carry our cross with joy and generosity, patience and love so that we may truly experience the remarkable transformation of our lives.

-Ace Tupasi

