

REFLECTING ON SUNDAY'S GOSPEL



As we march through Lent, it can be easy to think it's all about sacrifice. No chocolate, no alcohol, no meat on Fridays. Yet here, only in the second week of Lent, we have the story of the transfiguration. This reading reminds us of the "why" behind what we do. We don't fast from dessert to lose weight. We don't donate money or serve others because it's merely a nice thing to do. Lent is about transformation!

Peter, James, and John trudged up the mountainside behind Jesus. This must have been a difficult hike, because when they reached the top, "Peter and his companions had been overcome by sleep." Despite our best efforts, perhaps we, too, can be asleep to the deeper meaning of the Lenten season. Jesus is transfigured while they slumber, but eventually they become "fully awake, [and] they saw his glory and the two men standing with him."

This is no small thing! The disciples witness Jesus in His divine splendor and see the miraculous apparitions of Moses and Elijah. The entire mountain becomes a spiritual breakthrough. "A cloud came and cast a shadow over them, and they became frightened when they entered the cloud." These symbols are present in the Old Testament. They are present on Mount Sinai when Moses prayed alone and received the 10 Commandments. Elijah had a similar experience when he prayed alone before God. But here are ordinary men, former fishermen, who have been drawn up into an adventure beyond their wildest expectations. Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the fulfillment of all that came before. But Christianity is not the religion of the elite, where only the select few are allowed to participate. We are all invited into spiritual transformation. Lent is a privileged time for this!