



2nd Sunday of Lent (Year B)



Mark 9: 2 – 10

Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them.

And there appeared to them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

Then Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” Peter did not know what to say, for they were terrified.

Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!”

Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean.

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Reflection:

Mountains play a key role in Scripture. Both Moses and Elijah were called into the presence of God on top of Mt. Sinai. The temple, itself, stood on a mountain. Even today, when speaking of a “mountain top” experience, we speak of an encounter with something greater than ourselves. After speaking about his passion and death, for the first time, Jesus reveals a glimpse of his glory to Peter, James and John.



Table Discussion (at mealtime):

Has there been a time in your life where God made you sit up and notice / God was trying to tell you something? What do you think he was trying to tell you?

Saul's Story (at bedtime):

I wasn't always a follower of Christ. In fact, there was a time I thought he was an impostor and a phony. I had studied the many books of our religion; I knew the history, the laws, the wisdom and the prophets that made up our Bible. Who Jesus claimed to be made no sense to me. I didn't like the way it divided the people into believers and non-believers. And so I wanted to put a stop to it.

I was ready to do anything to stop the Christian message from spreading. I was ready to drag them off to jail. Sometimes you need to knock some sense into certain people. Sometimes you need to show them that they are wrong.

Little did I know that God wanted to do the same thing with me; not in a violent or punishing way, but in order to open my eyes to what I could not see. Sometimes God takes us up the mountain, as in the case of Moses and Elijah, so that we can see what we couldn't see before. At other times, he stops us in our tracks and puts a giant obstacle in our way. That's how he chose to act with me.

I was heading to the big city of Damascus one day, ready to arrest and drag Christians to jail. I had permission from the authorities and I even had a small group of men to help me. We were laughing and talking about what we were going to do when, all of a sudden, a bright light struck me to the ground, as if the hand of God itself was at play.

"Saul, Saul, why are you hurting me?" I heard a voice call out; but no one I could see. My sight had been taken away from me and I groped helplessly in the dark.

"Who are you?" My question was weak and uncertain. I wasn't sure I wanted a reply.

"I am Jesus of Nazareth," the voice answered. "The one whom you are hurting by arresting my followers."

For a moment I was stunned. How could I have been so wrong? I had been ready to arrest all Christians. I even witnessed one of them, Stephen, die at the hands of a crowd. Now, here I was, blinded by God and guilty of doing him harm.

"Go to Damascus," the voice continued. "There you will find a street named "Straight", there you will find a servant of mine. It is he who will restore your sight."

Many people will talk about a mountaintop experience, a time in their life when they were able to see clearly, sometimes for the very first time. My mountaintop experience began when I lost my sight, then had it restored by the hand of God. From that moment forward, I became Jesus' greatest follower. From that moment forward I did my best to listen to all that he said to me.

Since then I have travelled many miles and wore out many pairs of shoes. By foot, by ship, by horse and by mule I went, rarely staying in the same place twice.

During that period I endured rain, hail and even snow. A couple of times I was even lost at sea. There were times that people welcomed me and fed me; there were other times when they stoned me, threw me in jail or chased me out of town. No matter the welcome, no matter the response, I never stopped telling the story, that Jesus had looked at a poor sinner like me and showed his mercy, that Jesus came to rescue a world of poor sinners by his willingness to die on the cross.

"Love," there is no greater thing than that. And what proves God's love for us is that, while we wanted to kill His Son by nailing him to a tree, He was willing to die for us. Rarely, will anyone offer his life for someone who is good, but God did it for those who had done wrong.



Climbing God's Mountain (A bedtime story):

"Come, climb my mountain," God whispered so gently.

"Come, climb my mountain," God whispered once more.

"What shall I see?" I answered his whisper. "What shall I see, I can't see below?

What shall I see, when all clouds are lifted? What shall I see, I ask you again?"

"I'll show you my love, so big and so awesome. I'll show you my love, in fullest array.

I'll show you my love, so full of forgiveness, placing my love on full display.

"Couldn't you show me, here in the valley, couldn't you show me, here below?

"Couldn't you show me your love and your mercy, here in the valley below?"

"There is much I can show, here in the valley, there is much I can show you here below,

But there is much more to see on top of my mountain, much more than here below."

"What if I tire, when I go up your mountain, what if I tire on my way up to you?

What if I faint on my way up the mountain, what if I stumble or turn back in fear?

"I will go with you, if you climb up my mountain, I will go with you to show you the way.

I will go with you in case you should stumble, in case you should faint or want to turn back."

"What must I do to climb your mountain, what must I do to reach the top?

"What must I do to climb your mountain, what must I do to see your love?"

"Trust in me, when you climb my mountain, trust in the one who walks by your side.

Trust in me, who never will leave you, trust in the one who walks by your side."

"How will I know that you are with me, how will I know you're at my side?

How will I know that you are with me, how will I know you're always there?"

"I give you my Son as your companion, I will make sure he's always there.

I give you my Son as your older brother, to walk at your side when you are alone."

Will others go with me if I climb your mountain, will others go with me to share their love?

Will others go with me if I climb your mountain, will others go with me to share their joy?"

"I'll give you my Church to share the journey, I'll give you my Church to help you out.

I'll give you my Church to be your family, I'll give you my Church to share my love."

"What will we see when we climb your mountain, what will we see when we reach the top?

What will we see when we decide to follow, when climbing together we reach the top?"

"You'll see my Son, a gift once given, upon the cross so big and tall.

You'll see my son, a gift rejected, offering my love to one and all.

You'll see his arms, stretched out and open, you'll see his arms open to all.

You'll see his hands so ready and giving, ready to offer his love and his life."

“What must we do to climb your mountain, what must we do to share it all?
What must we do to climb your mountain, to be one with you and everyone else?”
“You must give of yourself in love and forgiveness, you must give of yourself again and again.
You must give of yourself in prayer and self-giving, serving your neighbour in all that you do.”



“A Mountain Top Experience” (Family Activity)

Have you ever thought of the Mass as a mountain top experience? Imagine Jesus asking you and your family to take some time out of your busy lives to come up the mountain with him to pray.

Suggestions:

Before setting out, ask yourselves: “How can we make this Mass (trip up the mountain with Jesus) special?” “How can we prepare ourselves to listen to him?” “How can we leave our busy schedules at home?” You may want to read the Gospel of the day and read the reflection. You may even want to ask yourself: “Where in my life do I need to be transformed?” and “Am I ready and willing to change?”

If you are within walking distance (even if it may take you some time) you may want to travel on foot (as Peter, James and John and many Christian pilgrims have done after them). Cars may often seem convenient, but they tend to “shuttle” us, reducing the whole experience of “going to Mass” to one more thing we do.

The Sunday Readings are like the conversation Jesus had with Moses and Elijah as the three disciples listened in. In the Readings, God wants to have a conversation with us, too. “What might he be saying?” Sometimes, no matter how hard we try to listen, the words that are spoken in the Readings and the Homily may seem a little unclear (as was the case with Peter, James and John). In those cases, try to listen to God in your heart. What might he want to say to you as you enter into his presence?

Transformation is big part of going to Church. Not only is the Bread and Wine transformed, but so are we. Notice that the Mass is only a series of events, quite ordinary in themselves. It is only when we enter into them with eyes of faith, attentive ears and a heart willing to change that something entirely different begins to happen. Ordinary bread and wine not only symbolize Christ’s broken body and blood poured out, but are transformed into Christ’s presence among us. Our ordinary lives, so often separated and divided from one another, are transformed into a community of people who journey together and help each other out. Ask yourself the question: “What is God trying to do as he gathers us together?”

On your way home from church (preferably on foot) talk about what Mass can be and share your experiences. “Where did you see God at work?” Sometimes the results are quite modest, there are many things that get in the way. But don’t get frustrated by the obstacles. God will eventually overcome them all.

Your mountain top experience can be summarized in a journal entry or with a picture (for those who express themselves better that way. These entries can be shared according to your own comfort level. Imagine the insights we would gain if we kept a spiritual journal of all the times we climbed God’s mountain together and spent some time to listen and to allow ourselves to be transformed.

More Daily Suggestions for Lent:

- Read Jesus' Teaching on loving your enemies (Luke 6: 27-36).
- Share something you like with someone else.
- Offer to play a game with someone.
- Make a card for your teacher, principal, coach or priest.
- Read Psalm 148 and write your own Psalm of Praise to God.
- Give something away (do this with the help of one of your parents).