

Second Sunday of Lent
March 11 & 12, 2017

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All Saints Parish, Syr., NY

My dear Brothers and Sisters.

Jesus took Peter, James and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good that we are here.'

In this powerfully consoling experience on the mountain, their eyes were opened, and they saw the divinity of Jesus, if only for a short time, but long enough to remember and never forget what they saw. Coming down from the mountain Jesus told them not to talk to anyone about the vision until he will be raised from the dead. What the disciples saw was beyond the experience of human senses, for a moment they saw with the eyes of faith.

My Sisters and Brothers. Sometimes words can be misleading. Vision here is not imagination of a creative mind but it is the ability to see beyond the sensory, material world, it is more than science or art or poetry. The gift of faith opens our eyes to a fullness of reality, otherwise hidden from us.

Remember the experience of Mary of Magdala at Jesus' tomb. She went there crying early in the morning, but the tomb was empty. Jesus was standing there close to her but she did not recognize him. She thought that he was the gardener. Then the moment came, the moment for the gift of faith, when Jesus called her by her name, 'Mary.' Then her eyes were opened and she recognized Jesus and embraced his feet.

Or remember the experience of the two disciples going to Emmaus from Jerusalem. They were downcast and sad because their hope in Jesus was shattered by his dying on the cross. And Jesus caught up with them on their way and explained to them the Scriptures and the Prophets about the Messiah, but they did not recognize him until the moment when they were at the table and Jesus broke the bread and gave it to them. This, the breaking of the bread, was the moment of the gift of faith, when their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus.

My Sisters and Brothers. We do not make our faith. Faith is a gift from God. The disciples were asking Jesus for it saying, 'Increase our faith.' It is a gift so readily given, that even asking for it is already an act of faith.

My Sisters and Brothers, I would like to ask you a question.

What does Lent look like through the eyes of faith?

Lent is to relent toward friend and foe,
responding with good to bad
wherever we go.

What does Lent look like through the eyes of faith?

Lent is to open our mind and heart to receive the gift of faith,
and so being able to live in God's healing and forgiving presence.

Lent is to pray for each other saying:

My dear Lord God, bless us and protect us.
Increase our faith, strengthen our hope,
and help us that we may grow in your grace,
loving you and each other more and more.

Amen