



Expecting Glory

What we expect to hear in Lent are lessons on prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and perhaps corporal works of mercy. This Sunday we are surprised to hear an account of the Transfiguration of the Lord. The leap from the lessons we heard last week – about the fasting of Christ, His hunger, and resisting of temptations of the devil – to the glory of Christ's divine face briefly revealed to the apostles on the mountain seems an odd development.

In the first reading, when we listen to the story of Abraham being given a promise of great inheritance and St. Paul telling us that *our citizenship is in heaven*, it is clear that the readings are focused on expectation.

What do we expect of our Christian lives and religious practices? What do we expect of the Lord?

Many of us seek peace of heart and mind. Many value the character-building qualities of Catholic discipline and want to raise our families in that spirit. Some want to strengthen a life of virtue. Some seek consolation in pain and want to join their suffering with the sufferings of Christ. Many look for the inspiration and energy to make our world a better, more just place.

Today's Gospel points to another expectation. It is the hopeful expectation to experience with Christ the glory of the Resurrection, the glory of His radiant face.

Our instincts may tell us to make the best of this world, to make the best of God's creation, and to govern it with justice. But the Gospel reminds us that we are not to aspire to pitch our tents here in the assumption that we might glory forever in the clumsy successes of our earthly stewardship.

The true prize of a faithful Christian life begins in the Resurrection, the transfiguration of *our lowly body to conform with his glorified body*, and rest in the vision of God face-to-face. We are invited to imitate St. Paul, not just in the discipline of his life in Christ, but first in his hopeful expectation to be united with Christ in the glory of His Resurrection.

As we go about our Lenten practices, let us renew this focus within ourselves.

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