

Saint Francis Xavier Parish

Second Sunday of Lent

March 8, 2020



REV. DENNIS M. DINAN, PASTOR

ABBY RODDEN, PARISH SECRETARY

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SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT, MARCH 8, 2020

Today's gospel proclaims, "He was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light" (Mt 17:2). How many are amazed that these men, Peter, James and John were able, somehow, to witness Jesus in his Glory? This is not something that they were to forget. Peter reminds us in his Second Letter, they had been

Eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that unique declaration came to him from the majestic glory, "This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased" (2Pt 1:16-17).

While we also might stand in amazement of this, what we do not realize is that this is the same gift we received in our Baptism (with one difference). We're speaking only of the virtues God infuses into our soul through the Sacrament: Faith, Hope and Charity. Of these, we will only speak of Faith here.

We heard all our lives that Faith is a gift. Indeed! And, what a gift—what a purpose! Ultimate success in life is achieving our salvation. This means achieving union with God in this world, perhaps total union. This means our Faith is at work.

But let's back-up a bit! Let's be certain about something. As human beings, there is nothing about us or concerning us that can help us to know God as he is. God is beyond human understanding—completely! This might seem like a hard concept, but let's look at an example we can understand.

To come to know something, our senses, i.e. the eye, the ear, our skin, our taste buds or our smell presents an image of what is grasped (sensed) to the imagination. We may not have thought about this, but we can see, sense or picture it internally in our minds. Then, our intellect is able to locate the object we sensed, or something similar, in our memory so that we can say, "This is my dog," or "Here comes my mother," or "My mother is making my favorite dish. I can smell it," or "This blanket feels soft." This is oversimplified, but you get the idea.

Suppose we have a friend, who has been blind from birth. One day, we are describing the colors of the sunset to him or her. The blind person hears the words, but the mind does not have anything to draw from. The person can only know what we are relating as words! They cannot know what we are describing in terms of the mix and movement of colors. It is impossible for them to know colors, or what color is. Likewise, having never seen God, we cannot know him, except as words! On the purely natural level, that is as far as we can go.

For the blind person, there is nothing of actual likeness to color that their mind can draw from. Similarly, when it comes to knowing God, our intellects can find nothing of actual likeness that it can draw from. Yes, we can conjure up images of Jesus—only in his human form though! His Divinity, and how this is joined to his human nature—we have no idea. The mind goes *tilt!* It's all mystery! Still, we do believe! But how is that?

We believe, or it is possible for us to believe—not since we are brilliant, not because we got that Bachelors or Associates degree, or we have studied Theology or read Saint Thomas Aquinas or Saint John of the Cross, or we have a fertile imagination, or we think we have had a vision. We can believe, and do believe, because the Virtue of Faith has been infused in us. Belief doesn't mean we proved something to ourselves. Belief means that we have come into contact with the Divinity.

Let's repeat some of the above. In order for the mind (the intellect) to know something, it must find some "likeness" within us, thereby to enable a judgment to be made, and as a result, to identify what we see, hear, taste, smell and touch. When it comes to God, the mind can find nothing! It's like we are blind!

In his goodness, thanks to our parents who did their duty as Christians and brought us for Baptism, God gave us some "thing" that is an actual likeness to him—to his Divinity. This is the *gift of Faith*. You may not have heard it explained this way.

Do not fool yourself that God gave us a replica of himself of some sort. His gift is not something less than God. Faith is

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infused in our souls as something that has a true "likeness" to God. Faith has the "divine essence!" Our knowledge of God, though most of us have never even dreamt of this, is based on the fact that, because of Baptism, our mind can find a likeness to God. It is not something that we consciously think through as it is happening. Our mind however knows!

This means that through Faith we have real contact, or union, with God. We cannot see him. The human intellect is incapable of seeing God, at least in this world. In heaven, we are to be given another gift, the "*Light of Glory*," whereby the intellect can see God as he is. This, I am sure you know, is called the *Beatific Vision*—to see God in his Glory!

This is described by Saint John of the Cross in *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, *The Dark Night of the Soul*, the *Spiritual Canticle* and *The Living Flame of Love*. It was further analyzed, described and developed in Saint John Paul II's Doctoral Thesis, presented at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Rome, under his former name Karol Wojtyla. It was translated into English and was published as *Faith According to Saint John of the Cross*, by Ignatius Press. It is now out-of-print. Given the above authors, this is serious stuff!

It might seem surprising, but seeing God in the *Beatific Vision* and having Faith has only one difference (which I mentioned earlier): in the former, God is seen; in the latter, God is believed. Equally, the "divine essence" is present to the intellect and is known in the knower.

By way of our intellect, we are truly united to God. God may be hidden, but we are in "touch" with the "divine essence." We are in union with God! Yet, we may have no awareness of this.

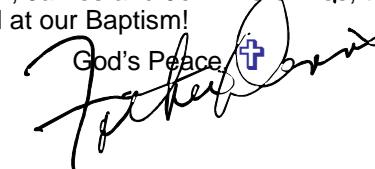
"*Living-out*" our *Baptismal Promises* means that we are intent on purifying, not only our intellect, but our will, our memory, and our imagination in the Spiritual Life so as to find him, Who is hidden—clouded from us by imperfections and yes, sin. This is not just fancy talk about this. This is for real!

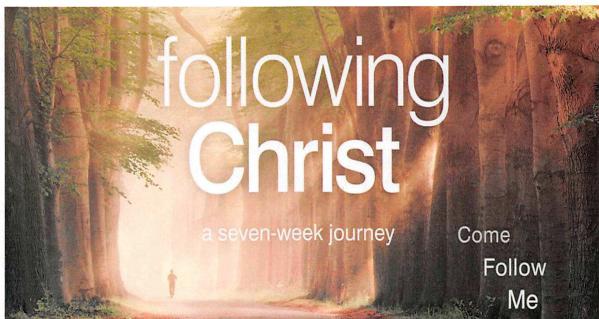
As in the case of Elijah, who was searching for God, the Lord told him, "*Go outside and stand on the mountain before the LORD; the LORD will be passing by*" (1Kg 19:11). Elijah did as told, and the story unfolds,

A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the LORD—but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake—but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was fire—but the LORD was not in the fire. After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound. [Then] Elijah hid his face in his cloak.... A voice said to him, "Elijah, why are you here?" (1Kg 19:11-13). [a question we all must answer]

So Sacred Scripture tells us, as Elijah found, that God is so hidden, he is found only as "a tiny whispering sound!" (see 1Kg 19:12). All who seek him—with a sincere effort—all their heart, find him. Having quiet is a must! Peace! We need to find and to know how to recollect ourselves with the distractions and the noise that surround us. If not, we just may not hear him.

We might protest that Jesus is the Way! He told us himself, and Sacred Scripture itself asserts his claim, "*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*" (Jn 14:6). However, it is through him we have Faith—that Faith alone is the means of union with God. It's no wonder Jesus continually stressed it! Saint John of the Cross assures us: with its "essential likeness" to the Divine, Faith bridges the (infinite) gap between God and us and also gradually prepares us for the *Beatific Vision*—the "in Glory" part! Until then, we will not see God, his Face or his Glory. But, we're still as close as Peter, James and John were. Yes, this is "*living-out*" what happened at our Baptism!


God's Peace 



Following Christ is the follow-up course to the *Discovering Christ* course offered in Sullivan County last year. The program is 7 weeks and is open to anyone who has completed the *Discovering Christ* series in this county or elsewhere.

Topics covered will include:

- Introduction and Daily Personal Prayer
- Hearing God in Scripture
- The Power of the Sacraments
- Forgiving One Another
- The Spirit-Empowered Life
- We Are At War Retreat
- The World, the Flesh and the Devil
- The Heart of a Disciple

Dates: Sundays, April 19 & 26, May 3, 17 & 31, and June 6 and 14. (7-week series)*

Time: 5:00-7:30 p.m.

Location: St. Peter's School Cafeteria (basement level)
264 North Main Street, Liberty, NY

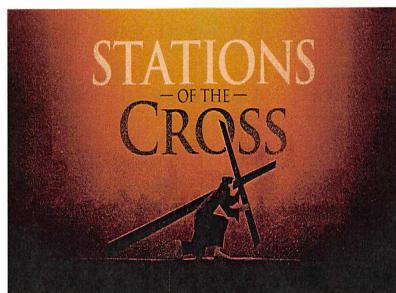
*Retreat: Sunday, June 14, from 2:00-7:00 p.m.

Cost: \$40.00 per person

This program is run by volunteers and is not sponsored by an outside organization. The \$40 fee will help us cover the cost of materials and meals for the duration of the series. Please bring your \$40 cash donation the first day.

To register or for info, contact us: discoverchristsullivan@gmail.com or call Mary Ann 845-701-1491 or Judy at 914-799-5050.

SAVE THE DATES



What: Stations of the Cross

When: Each Wednesday of Lent

From 6:00-6:30pm

Where: St. Francis Xavier Church

An Afternoon of Celtic Spirituality

Sunday, March 22, 2020

3 - 5 PM

St. Peter's Church, Liberty

Directed by

Sister Peggy Murphy, O.P.

*Who is it that you seek? How then shall we live?
How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?*

Come and reflect on the deep, rich Celtic tradition that has enriched our faith.

Light refreshments will be served.



ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK
YOUTH FAITH FORMATION
Catechetical



Lenten Afternoon of Prayer

SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 2020
From 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

BKT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CENTER
16 Frankie Lane, Liberty

Sister Margaret Ellen Burke, SC
will conduct the afternoon

CONFESIONS at 3:00 pm

LITURGY CELEBRATED at 4:00 pm
By Rev. Edward Bader

Join us for an Afternoon of Prayer, Reflection, Reconciliation and the Sunday Liturgy

Registration Form

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Return To: BKT Religious Education Center
PO Box 1011
Liberty, New York 12754
845-292-9100 / bkt4@verizon.net

*Please Return By March 1 – Donation \$4.00
Make checks payable to: Sisters of St. Dominic*

ST. ANTHONY'S CHURCH PRESENTS
A LENTEN PRAYER PLAY
ALAH DARI
MY LORD AND MY GOD



SATURDAY, APRIL 4 AT 6 PM
MASS 4.00 PM
POTLUCK 5.00 PM
PLAY 6 PM
ST. ANTHONY'S PARISH CENTER, YULAN

Mass Intentions

Saturday, March 7th

SFX 4:30pm - Walter & Florence Hubert
Requested by Their Children

Sunday, March 8th

(NO MASS at OLL)

SFX 8:30am - Our Parish Family
SFX 11:00am - Our Parish Family

Monday, March 9th

NO MASS

Tuesday, March 10th

SFX 8:30am - Available or Our Parish Family

Wednesday, March 11th

SFX 8:30am - Available or Our Parish Family

Thursday, March 12th

SFX 8:30am - Fr. Michael P. Sepp
Requested by The Parish

Friday, March 13th

SFX 8:30am - Terry McCarthy
Requested by Paddy McCarthy

Saturday, March 14th

SFX 4:30pm - Josephine Kelly
Requested by A Friend

Sunday, March 15th

(NO MASS at OLL)

SFX 8:30am - Available or Our Parish Family
SFX 11:00am - Thomas J. Greer
Requested by Wendell & Lillian Putz

Collection

March 1, 2020

First Collection

St. Francis Xavier \$1,612.00

Second Collection (R & M)

St. Francis Xavier \$454.00

Other (Ash Wednesday)

St. Francis Xavier \$47.00

Total
\$2,113.00

Thank you!

Collection

February 26, 2020 (Ash Wednesday)

Holiday Collection

St. Francis Xavier \$162.00

Total
\$162.00

Thank you!

READINGS



Genesis 12:1-4a
2 Timothy 1:8b-10
Matthew 17:1-9

Please Pray for our Parish Family

Please write your prayer intentions on the new lists at the back of the church.

For the Sick: David Meyer, Ed Coates, Ella Dorothy Neidert, Dolly Marinelli

For the Deceased: Dorothy Schlegel, Peggy Lee Romano, Carmen T. Holstrom, Joseph Ramon Gonzalez, Andrew Kimmel, Grace Kimmel, Madeline LoBasso, Margaret Corkett, Joseph Barca, Emerson "Bucky" Misner

For those Serving in the Military: