

Second Sunday of Lent (B)

We are still at the **beginning** of Lent, this season of repentance and penitence, but today the Church is already talking to us about the **Resurrection**.

- In the **transfiguration** of Jesus in today's Gospel, Peter, James, and John get a glimpse of Christ's **eternal glory**, the glory he claimed fully after the resurrection. He stands between Moses, and Elijah as the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. He is the way, the truth, and the life.
- **St Paul**, in today's Second Reading, writes passionately about God's power and faithfulness as revealed in Christ.
- And he actually **changes his emphasis** mid-sentence to take the spotlight **off** Christ's death on the cross and let it shine **on** his glorious resurrection.

And yet, Easter is still more than a month away!

What's going on here? It's very simple, really.

- Lent is indeed meant to be a time of repentance and penitence, a time of sacrifice and reflection in which we **acknowledge the weight of suffering** in the world and in our lives, suffering that always has its **roots in sin**. God is not the cause of suffering. What we choose and how we choose to live it may be the cause of suffering.
- This suffering is always **part** of the story of every human life, with or **without** Christ; but **with** Christ, it is not the **end** of the story.

- Crosses **purify** us of selfishness, if we allow them to, teaching us to **lean more on Christ** and to have a greater experience of his **wisdom and joy** - his resurrection.

In our Catholic faith, the cross and resurrection are two sides of the same coin; we must never allow ourselves to think of **one** without thinking of the **other**.

A healthy, **balanced Christian** has to always keep these two things in view.

- By thinking of the **resurrection**, we find strength to **carry our crosses**.
- By not running away from our **crosses**, we make sure we're on the **path to the resurrection**.
- This is the Christian wisdom that keeps us **joyful amid suffering**, and **reasonable amid success**.
- This is why we can trivialize Lent but emphasize its importance as a time of cleansing and redirection towards the goal.

Two things can help us **cultivate** this wisdom during Lent.

First, we should use the **crucifix**.

- It used to be common practice for Catholic families to have **crucifixes on the walls** of their houses, especially in their bedrooms and wherever the family would pray together. It shouldn't be some small symbol that gets lost in the stuff. It should be significantly noticeable to all.
- This practice has fallen off recently, but there's no reason we can't start it up again.

- I strongly suggest that with this we reintroduce the pious practice of the way of the cross not just during Lent but also all year round.
- We can also wear a crucifix **necklace** or pin, or carry a **holy card** with an image of the crucifixion, or put a **picture** of the **suffering Christ** on our cell phone screen.
- This helps us keep in mind what Christ suffered for **our salvation**.
- If we do that, the crosses that come **our** way will never **surprise** or **derail** us.
- We will learn to recognize more quickly **God's hand** in them.

And second, we should pray the Rosary.

- The Rosary is a **simple** prayer that gives us a **tour** of all the events of Christ's life, including his **passion** and **resurrection**.
- Even if we only pray **one decade** a day, which takes a few minutes, this tried-and-true prayer will help us **avoid tunnel vision** in our spiritual lives.

In a few moments we will receive Jesus in the **Eucharist**, the marvelous fruit of his passion and resurrection. Let it transform us to where our lives become a presence of the glory that is to be revealed in us.

When we do, let's **talk to him** about our crosses and those of our loved ones, asking him to teach us to find **hope in his resurrection** even when we share in the **pain of his passion**.

By your cross and resurrection, you have set us free! You are the savior of the world!