

February 28, 2021

Second Sunday of Lent

Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18

Rom 8:31b-34

Mk 9:2-10

GROW: Oh, the gloom! The view out my window on a typical Michigan winter day can be described as “grayscale monochrome,” a technical term for black-and-white photographs. Fortunately, the sun peeks out on occasion, providing a lovely sunrise or sunset that can lift my mood and remind me that spring will come. If such an ordinary thing can provide hope, imagine what the Transfiguration provided for the disciples who witnessed it? “His clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them.” And even though they were so terrified, the voice of God came from a cloud, conveying comfort and truth: “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.” The disciples did not know what lay ahead, but this vision of Jesus and the Father’s presence in their midst would give them hope and foretell Jesus’ glorious resurrection. As we continue on our Lenten journey, we can turn to God, who will one day transfigure us in the same way Christ was, to strengthen us through the gray days ahead. And St. Paul’s powerful words that “God is for us” add solace and encouragement.

GO: As Catholics, we are likely very familiar with the four Gospels, but I have to say I can’t get enough of Paul’s letters. Like a good coach, Paul encourages us to dig deep and trust God. In today’s reading, he reminds the Romans that God loves us so much that he did not spare his own Son. I’m struck by his assurance that Jesus not only died and was raised for us, but “indeed intercedes for us.” Lent is an ideal time to turn to Jesus in prayer, asking that he give us the grace to grow in faith and turn away from sin. At the same time, we can offer intercessory prayer for *others*, just as we do at every Mass. Perhaps as we continue our Lenten journey, we can make an extra effort to pray for the needs of other people: Those we know personally, such as friends and family members; and those whom we do not know, such as government leaders or Christians experiencing persecution in other countries.

PRAY: I find that I often make prayer all about me! Yet, as the Church teaches, “in intercession, those who pray look ‘not only to their own interests, but also to the interests of others,’ even to the point of praying for those who do them harm.” (CCC 2635) One way to practice intercessory prayer is to make a list and pray for the people and intentions on it once a day. For those of us who regularly pray the rosary, another practice might be to dedicate each decade to an individual in need of prayer.