

MARCH 1, 2026 FATHER PETER TURRONE

So, we've now begun the Second Week of Lent and we know that in the first few days, we have this excitement, this fervour, because we want to be able to begin a period of penance by giving up certain things, taking on new devotions, spending more time in prayer, and all of this is good. But we can maybe find ourselves after the first week getting a little bit tired or distracted and kind of forgetting about what we had originally promised to God. Oftentimes, through our spiritual director.

So, today, in this beautiful episode in the gospel, we hear how Jesus experiences this transfiguration. So, we know that Jesus is God and man. He's a divine person. And his three first disciples, right? The first three that He chose are there with Him and they have this privileged moment to be able to see Christ be transfigured before them.

So, what does it mean to be transfigured? Well, it means to be transformed. So, Jesus, as the God-man, right? They would see Him in His humanity. But in this one moment, this glorious moment, they're able to see His divinity shining through His humanity.

And it's different, because Jesus is the new Moses. When we go back and we look at the Old Testament and the stories, there are many parallels, but we find is that when Moses speaks to God, right? When he's listening to God and the Lord speaks to Him, it says that Moses' face was so radiant that he had to cover it, right? Because people couldn't look at him because the light was so strong.

But there's a big difference here because it was the light of God shining on the face of Moses that allowed him to change. So, the light was external shining upon him and it had a change within him. But in Jesus, who was God, who was light from light, God, as we say in the Creed, it's

different because the light now is not coming from the outside shining upon Him, but it now originates from within Himself. So, this light is shining forth through, again, through His humanity and it's illuminating all the people around Him.

And this also brings us to something that we have to look forward to in the future. So, if you read the Book of Revelation, and it says that at the end of time, right, when Heaven and Earth, right? So, they come together and then there's at the Parousia, the Lord is here and all those with God, right, with the Lord, will be in a place, will be in the space, in God, where His light will illuminate all of us. So, He's the one in the New Jerusalem that illuminates all of us.

So, it's something to look forward to and we can experience that here and now, all right? So, we can experience, as the Christian faith, even though we're going through this period of penance, it's not completely and solely focused on penance during the season of Lent. We know this is to help us to become closer to God, so that we can empty ourselves of unnecessary distractions so that we can better hear God speaking to us.

And the privileged way, again, to hear God speak to us, again, is in the mass, right? So, we come to mass, His Word is proclaimed, it's God speaking to us, and then, if we're able to receive His body, His living flesh, He speaks to us, right? Also, in the depths of our hearts. And what He wants to say to us is what is good and true and what is beautiful.

We have so many distractions, again, from technology, from the news. You know, the Holy Father reminds us that a lot of what is there is opinion or fake. And He's saying, "No, no. Be careful. We're Christians, so we are looking for what is true," and again, the ultimate source comes through the scriptures.

So, the scriptures are a wonderful way, right? It should be the book that accompanies us during this season of Lent. Spending time, even just a few moments, whatever our vocation may be, our particular vocation, we can listen to God's Word. And I may not be able to get to church, but I can maybe find a place in my home and that can be my mountaintop where I can pull away from everything and everyone and have that quiet place, again, for God.

And I'd mentioned this months ago about the whole idea of having a little altar in our home, or a little space, and then it's an excellent way, again, especially if we're not able to get to mass as much as we would like to during this high season of Lent. And so, we can have this time and listen to what God wants to say to us. And having a little notebook, which is very useful, can be a time where we can write down a few things.

So, what is God saying to me? Is there one word? Is there a phrase? Is there something that the Lord has to say to me that is necessary? And that I can kind of meditate on it, I can chew on that over the course of the day, even over the course of the week. I don't necessarily have to do all the readings every single day, because there might be something that God wants us to meditate on for the week, or maybe even for an entire Lenten season. But we don't know unless we try. We don't know unless we try.

So, when we look back at the Gospel again. So, we have this beautiful episode, and again, as I was saying earlier, that with the gift that God has given us, and yes, we're preparing ourselves for the celebration of Easter, right? So, for the Sacred Triduum. We do know as Christians, or we should know at least, that we can experience these moments of joy, the spiritual joy, already now.

There's a wonderful author, so he's a Catholic priest, and he says the following in one of his commentaries. So, to quote from him, his name is Fr. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis. And in his commentary in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and on this particular episode of the transfiguration, he says the following. He says:

“The event of the transfiguration is essential for us to understand that life in Christ is about fullness of life now.” So, there's no contradiction between the present and also the future, but he says the fullness of life now. “Christianity is not a religion of just continual postponement of joy and delight, but the transfiguration is the experience of the fullness of the divine presence, action, communication, and glory now in our very midst in the world that is passing and that is filled with disappointments.”

So, how useful is that to think about. So, yeah, so what we're doing in this season now of Lent is a means to be emptied of ourselves so that we can experience the joy of the resurrection. But in order to have that experience, as Paul tells Timothy in the second reading, we also have to join in the suffering for the Gospel.

So, what does it mean to suffer for the Gospel? Well, it means that, that I, in my own small way, again, according to my vocation, that I'm able to live and demonstrate by my actions who I believe in and who I love. And then show that and share that with other people.

The suffering doesn't come from somebody who actively listens and embraces the message, but it'll often come from the coldness of hearts, from people rejecting it, or even worse, indifference.

You know, the Holy Father just called this year the special year dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi, and I'm reading this wonderful book on the life of St. Francis. It was just recently published. And in it, there's

this one episode and it comments on St. Francis preaching to the birds. So much has been said about this. So, why did St. Francis start preaching to the birds? Because he was frustrated that people were indifferent, not that they were throwing stones at him, but they were completely indifferent to the Gospel message, and that was a source of suffering for him. But he turned that into an opportunity, right, in his goodness and light-heartedness, to preach to the birds. He goes, “At least they'll listen to me.”

So, we hope that more than the birds will listen. But the people we work with, the people in our homes, again, that they will want to listen and join in. But the best way they listen, of course, the most effective way, is by seeing how we live. And we ask God for the grace to be able to experience now the joy of the Gospel, to have our own mountaintop experience, so that we can share that with those around us as well.