



SUNDAY REFLECTION

Today's readings link together two very important themes that play off each other in the New Testament: that Jesus was transfigured into glory: and that we too should be transfigured. As Christ was gloriously transfigured, Paul reminds us that Christ 'will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of His own glorious body'. 'Do not be conformed to this world,' he writes to the Romans, 'but be transformed by the renewal of your minds' – using the same Greek word for 'transformed' as St. Luke uses here to speak of Jesus being 'transfigured.' These 'wretched bodies or ours,' as St. Paul says, are so marked by sickness and aging and limitations, but will be transfigured 'into copies of His glorious body.'

Like a leaden echo the question comes to the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, How can we keep beauty from decaying No, 'nothing can be done / to keep / at bay age and age's evils,' but the answer then comes, give beauty 'back to God, / beauty's self and beauty's giver.' A great consciousness permeates Christianity of the beauty of the person which, ambiguous in this life thanks to 'change and decay' will be completed in the next by the 'power by which Christ can subdue the universe' (today's Second Reading). This is not all eschatological: think of a Pieta and how a body is transformed by the suffering that emerges out of love, or by the love that emerges out of suffering. In this Gospel as well the three disciples present will also be present in Gethsemane on that dark night to see Jesus transfigured by suffering as the prelude to His Resurrection.

The archer must know his target before he shoots, and the readings today give Christians their target for Lent, which is nothing less than a transfiguration based on Christ himself. A clear Mediterranean night sky without cloud or pollution displays a vault of light that is breath-taking in its reach and beauty. This is the symbol God gives to Abraham for the number of his descendants. Although already old and dying, Abraham's future is transfigured by the promise. The promise is carried forward, but now more personally, in the second reading where it is not only the future that will be transformed, but we ourselves individually, as long as we are receptive to this possibility. Finally, we look at what that means: Christ is the model of our transformation. Lent, the season of renewed conversion in preparation to celebrate His Passion, death and resurrection, gives it its special importance for us now.

STEWARDSHIP: Peter, James, and John wanted to build a "booth" for Jesus and just stay on the mountain where His transfiguration took place. But the Son of God, the Chosen One, knew that He must instead keep moving toward His crucifixion. We, too, must rise from worship and do what we can to hasten the coming of the kingdom.

READINGS THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

20 MAR '22

SUNDAY MASSES

Ex. 3:1-8, 13-15: Another important stage in salvation history: God reveals His name to Moses at the burning bush. The precise meaning of the name may be debated by scholars but the fact that God revealed it was itself a singular gift, for in those days a name was more than a mere label: it was an expression of a person's innermost self and to reveal it to another was already an act of intimacy.

1 Cor. 10:1-6, 10-12: Paul notes that what happened in Israel's history stands as a warning to us today. The Israelites, though they were "baptized" by the water of the Sea of Reeds and fed with food and drink in the desert, failed to please God. So too, without the personal response of faith and love, the sacraments of baptism and of eucharist will not save us.

Lk. 13:1-9: The gospel also focuses on unresponsiveness to God: on the one hand, warning of the danger that awaits those who fail to repent and, on the other, warning that it is only while this life lasts that we are able to respond to the unending chances that God offers us.

5:00 p.m. VIGIL MASS FIRST SCRUTINY

Ex. 17:3-7:

Rom. 5:1-2, 5-8:

Jn. 4:5-42:

ST. JOSEPH'S TABLE

The Feast of St. Joseph, which always falls in the middle of Lent, is especially commemorated and celebrated in Italy in general, and Sicily in particular, where St. Joseph has been long-regarded as the island's Patron saint. It is there, among Sicilians, that the tradition of the "Tavola di San Giuseppe" or "St. Joseph's Table" has its origins.

March 19th is, in Italy, also Father's Day—which isn't at all surprising, as St. Joseph was, of course, the foster father of Jesus. This celebration is a symbolic "thank you" and a renewal of the Sicilian people's devotion to Saint Joseph.

It is a *shared* celebration with the entire community where the riches of food are given as alms to the poor: traditional etiquette is that *no one* can be turned away from this table.

Origins

Legends from the Middle Ages attributed the end of a devastating drought to a prayer-devotion that the Sicilian people made to St. Joseph.

During a time of drought and famine, no rain fell on Medieval Sicily. Food crops for both people and livestock withered and died. The people prayed to St. Joseph for help.

When the clouds opened, the desperately-needed rain poured down, and there was much rejoicing! After the harvest, to show their gratitude, they prepared a table with special foods to honor St. Joseph and to share with the poor. After thanking and honoring the saint, they distributed the food to the less fortunate.

This celebration became an annual tradition. Each year, wealthy families prepared huge buffets. The less fortunate people of the community, especially the homeless and sick, were invited, and all the remaining food and proceeds were given to the poor.

Through the years, the tradition has remained throughout Italy, and is also prevalent in Poland, Malta, Spain, the Phillipines, and, with the influx of Sicilian immigrants to the US, here in our own country.

Three-Fold Purpose

The heart of this tradition can be found in these three aspects:

Veneration—special recognition of St. Joseph during Mass and at the "table."

The Table—both a kind of "altar of reverence", and a communal celebration.

The Poor—The intention of all the gifts is to help those in need.

Once again, as has been done in previous years here at St. Stephen's you are invited to bring commercially packaged breads and rolls to the parish which in turn will be distributed on your behalf to Food Banks in the area. This year there are two ways that you can contribute. If you are attending one of the Masses on the weekend of the 19th-20th March there will be a table in the Commons where you can place your contribution.

PRAYERS

for Transfiguration

God of truth,
a blessing you promised
and a blessing you give.
Through deserts and up mountains we follow Jesus
and there find you...
and ourselves
as we were meant to be.

We long to hold on to that vision, O God.
We try
to set up tents and stay as long as we can,
because it is there
that we know
we are truly home.

But faith calls us,
for it was in faith
that Jesus Lived life
and accepted death.
His faith in you
was born of love.
His love
was born of freedom.

In Jesus,
the bright cloud
of your grace
is forever upon us.
may we be willing
to leave
the mountaintop
experiences
of life
and walk the plains
of every day.

AMEN

THE ETERNAL
SCREENING PROCESS



REFLECTIONS FOR THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Monday 14 Mar

Dan. 9:4-10: God's people Israel makes a humble confession of sin before God and asks for pardon.

Lk. 6:36-38: Jesus tells us that if we want God to pardon us, we must forgive those who have offended us.

On Saturday, Matthew's Jesus told us to be perfect as our 'heavenly Father is perfect'. Today Luke's Jesus tells us to 'be compassionate as our Father is compassionate.' On Thursday, we saw the divine passive: 'Ask and it will be given to you' – by God. In today's Gospel reading we have the same source: Do not judge and you will not be judged by God. Give and it will be given to you – by God.

Tuesday 15 Mar

Is. 1:10, 16-20: The prophet Isaiah invites Israel, and all of us, to repent; to learn to do good and to search for justice.

Mt. 23:1-12: Jesus condemns those who do not practice what they preach. Our faith should be genuine.

Yesterday the Gospel's focus was on compassion; in today's Gospel, Jesus criticizes the scribes and Pharisees precisely because of their lack of compassion: they tie up heavy burdens, lay them on people's shoulders but will they lift a finger to move them? It is not the burden which is the problem: Jesus has a burden as He can declare earlier in the Gospel, 'Come to Me all who labor and are heavy burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon yourself, and learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.' Echoing the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus contrasts the marks of the disciple with those of the scribes and Pharisees. The careful reader will however note that the earliest readers of Matthew may have been closer to Pharisees than ideal disciples.

Wednesday 16 Mar

Jer. 18:18-20: The prophet Jeremiah discovers that his enemies are plotting to kill him, although he has done them only good. In this Jeremiah was a figure of Christ.

Mt. 20:17-28: Jesus predicts His own suffering and death, and reminds His followers the leaders of His Church not to seek human glory, but rather to aim for a life of humble service.

Our earliest impressions of the first disciples in their first steps are usually more positive than is justified. In today's Gospel Matthew sketches a different and indeed more human reality – party and privilege, 'us and them' with the usual consequences for the 'them', in this case the remaining ten. And all of this in the light of Jesus' prophecy of His own betrayal, death and resurrection. The solution is not easy – to be servant and last of all, as heard at the end of yesterday's gospel, but it is precisely what He lives out in the way He dies.

Thursday 17 Mar

Jer. 17:5-10: The perspective given is provided by the first reading establishes a contrast between trust in man (flesh) and trust in the Lord.

Lk. 16:19-31: the prophet's insight into God's close care for all His people emerges especially in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. That the poor man receives compensation after death, is beautifully consonant with the insight of the prophets that God has a special care for the poor and the weak.

Both readings operate on the opposition trust in man and trust in God, and not on the opposition of rich and poor as such. The rich man cannot see beyond his own door – he is blinded by his lifestyle – by putting his trust in what he can see wealth and luxury as symbolized by the color purple, fine linen and magnificent feasts. The irony in Abraham's reply should not be overlooked: 'If they will not listen either to Moses or to the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead.' But somebody did rise from the dead – and whom does that convince?

Friday 18 Mar

Gen. 37:3-4, 12-13, 17-28: To the Christian eye, it is easy to recognize in Joseph a figure of Christ: he was handed over by his brothers, and the evil they had planned was by God's design turned to good when he became a source of deliverance – not just for his family but for all the Jewish people.

Mt. 21:33-43, 45-46: Today's parable is a prediction of the trial, suffering, and death Jesus would undergo; and, as Matthew sets out the story, it is told only a few days before the events took place. It is spoken in Jerusalem, the place of Jesus' death, and addressed to some of those who would be closely involved in that trial and death. Realizing how quickly these predictions would be fulfilled makes for a special intensity in hearing them proclaimed today.

The general thrust of the parable in the Gospel is clear. But what happens to it, if it is heard from the perspective of the audience against whom it was told? Matthew tells us that 'when they heard His parables, the chief priests and the scribes realized He was speaking about them.' What is it like to be an audience under attack? Have you even found yourself in that situation – the butt of someone else's joke, the point of another's story? 'But you don't

understand', you hear yourself say. 'There was more to it than that!' If we are to understand what is truly the matter with the chief priests and the scribes, we need to be able to enter their world. Jesus, like Joseph in the first reading was not always easy to take.

Saturday 19 Mar

Mic. 7:14-15, 18-20: A; most beautiful and touching prayer of Israel to God to pardon her sins, to 'tread down their faults to the bottom of the sea'. It is a prayer all of us can make.

Lk. 15:1-3, 11-32: The parable of the Prodigal Son, or if we prefer the Prodigal Father is an incomparable statement of confidence in God's mercy. It is encouraging to hear of this mercy being offered to the ne'er-do-well younger son. But there are no limits to that mercy: the generous Father wishes to extend it also to the self-righteous older son who appears not to understand his own need for mercy.

According to Luke, Jesus tells the Parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Lost Son because the Pharisees and the scribes complained that Jesus welcomed sinners and shared their tables. Today's Gospel, this most wonderful of Jesus' stories, is full of subtlety: who is lost – the first son or the second? Surely not the first son! He remains at the family home, apparently makes no demands for an inheritance. But the second son, the younger one; he is the one who is lost: lost to his father and to himself. But there is a turn-around, (perhaps a conversion?) he's no longer lost; he has come to his senses and returned home. He has found himself and found his father. So, who's lost? And here again is the irony – maybe the one who never got lost is really lost.

SECOND WEEK OF LENT

12 MARCH - 20 MARCH 2022

Saturday 12 Mar Lenten Weekday I

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Lenten Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer II
(Intention: Roger Rix RIP)**

1:00 – 4:30 p.m. Confessions

5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass Second Sunday of Lent

**Proper of Day, Creed, Preface 2nd Sunday of Lent, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Barbara Mytych)**

Sunday 13 Mar Second Sunday of Lent

**7:00 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Creed, Preface 2nd Sunday of Lent, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Parish of St. Stephen, Martyr)**

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Creed, Preface 2nd Sunday of Lent, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Evelyn Subueto RIP)**

**11:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Creed, Preface 2nd Sunday of Lent, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Holy Souls in Purgatory)**

2:00 p.m. Mass Brig

Monday 14 Mar Lenten Weekday 2 Day Off

**6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of The Day, Lenten Preface III, Eucharistic Prayer II
(Intention:)**

7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of The Day, Lenten Preface III, Eucharistic Prayer II
(Intention:)**

Tuesday 15 Mar Lenten Weekday 2

6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of The Day, Lenten Preface IV, Eucharistic Prayer III

7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of The Day, Lenten Preface IV, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention:)**

6:00 p.m. Finance Council

Wednesday 16 Mar Lenten Weekday 2

**6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of The Day, Lenten Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer II
(Intention:)**

7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of The Day, Lenten Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer II
(Intention:)**

12:00 p.m. Mass Portsmouth Naval Hospital

Thursday 17 Mar Lenten Weekday 2 St. Patrick

6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of The Saint, Lenten Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer III

7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of The Saint, Lenten Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention:)**

4:00 – 6:30 p.m. Confessions

**6:30 p.m. Mass Proper of The Saint, Lenten Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention:)**

Friday 18 Mar Lenten Weekday 2 St. Cyril of Jerusalem

6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Saint, Lenten Preface III, Eucharistic Prayer III

7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of The Saint, Lenten Preface III, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention:)**

12:00 p.m. Mass Portsmouth Naval Hospital

4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Confessions

7:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross

Saturday 19 Mar Saint Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Saint, Gloria, Creed, Proper Preface,
Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention:)**

1:00 – 4:30 p.m. Confessions

**5:00 p.m. Mass Vigil Third Sunday Of Lent First Scrutiny RCIA
Proper of Day, Scrutiny, Creed, Preface Third Sunday of Lent,
Eucharistic Prayer III**

Sunday 20 Mar Third Sunday of Lent

7:00 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Creed, Preface Third Sunday of Lent, Eucharistic Prayer II

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Creed, Preface Third Sunday of Lent, Eucharistic Prayer III

11:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Creed, Preface Third Sunday of Lent, Eucharistic Prayer III

2:00 p.m. Mass Brig

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Many of us may be tempted to begin our examination of conscience when we get in line at the confessional. There is nothing wrong with this practice if the line looks something like this:

However, you don't want to get caught in the middle of your examination when it is your turn to go in to the confessional. If you don't regularly examine your conscience, it may take awhile before you are fully prepared. Next time you go to confession, consider preparing before you go; for one should not simply just go to confession, but rather make the best confession possible.

One of the essential pieces in the Rite of Penance is the examination of conscience. We take an internal self-examination of our spiritual life and bring to light those sins that keep us from a more intimate relationship with Christ. Here, we recall our sins and faults committed since our last confession, or any other sins from our past which we have not yet confessed.

There are several ways to make a good examination of conscience. One of the easiest and most common ways to examine your conscience is by turning to the Ten Commandments for guidance. In this way you will prepare your heart and mind for confession by contemplating on the Word of God.

Each of the Ten Commandments can be broken down into questions. For example, if you ask yourself if you have killed someone - for most of us it is an obvious "no." But, we may fail to grasp the entirety of the commandment. We may not have physically killed an individual, but have we emotionally, physically, or spiritually hurt ourselves and others? This brings the fifth commandment into a whole new light.

The examination of conscience below is based on the Ten Commandments. Begin by praying. This will put you in the best frame of mind for recalling your sins.

PRAYER BEFORE CONFESSION BY ST. JEROME

"Show me, O Lord, Your mercy, and delight my heart with it. Let me find You whom I so longingly seek. Behold, here is the man whom the robbers seized, manhandled, and left half dead on the road to Jericho. Kind-hearted Samaritan, come to my aid! I am the sheep who wandered into the wilderness. Seek after me and bring me home again to Your fold. Do with me according to Your Will, that I may abide with You all the days of my life, and praise You with all those who are with You in heaven for all eternity. Amen."

Here are 99 questions to prayerfully consider before going to confession

“I am the Lord, your God. You shall have no other gods besides me.”

1. Have I doubted or denied God’s existence?
2. Have I been ungrateful to God for His benefits?
3. Am I open to God’s will?
4. Do I rely solely on myself and not on God?
5. Have I abandoned the Catholic Faith?
6. Have I joined a non-Catholic church or anti-Catholic group?
7. Have I refused to believe any truths of the Faith or any teachings of the Church?
8. Did I fail to profess or defend the Catholic Faith?
9. Have I failed to go to confession at least once a year?
10. Have I been faithful to my daily prayers?
11. Have I practiced any superstitions?
12. Am I unwilling to turn away from everything that is opposed to God's work in my soul?

“You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.”

13. Have I taken the Lord's name in vain, for example, carelessly, in anger, or surprise?
14. Do I speak irreverently of holy persons, places or things?
15. Have I cursed myself or others?
16. Did I use profanity?
17. Have I called down evil upon anyone or anything?
18. Did I get angry with God?
19. Have I angered others so as to make them curse?
20. Have I broken a vow made to God?
21. Have I murmured or complained about God?

“Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy.”

22. Did I miss Mass on a Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation?
23. Did I arrive to Mass late or leave early?
24. Did I receive Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin?
25. Have I been irreverent while receiving the Most Blessed Sacrament?
26. Have I been willfully distracted during Mass?
27. Do I distract others during Mass?
28. Have I done unnecessary work on Sunday?

“Honor your father and your mother.”

29. Have I disobeyed, insulted, or shown disrespect to my parents or legitimate superiors?
30. Did I neglect my duties to my husband, wife, children or parents?
31. Did I neglect to give a good religious example to my family?
32. Am I disrespectful, impolite, or discourteous toward my family?
33. Have I failed to meet my children's physical, spiritual, emotional, and educational needs?
34. Have I disobeyed the lawful demands of my superiors, teachers, or employer?
35. Did I fail to actively take an interest in the religious education and formation of my children?
36. Did I cause anyone to leave the Catholic Church?

- 37. Did I cause tension and fights in my family?
- 38. Did I care for my aged and infirm relatives?

“You shall not kill.”

- 39. Did I kill or physically injure anyone?
- 40. Did I have an abortion, or advise someone else to have an abortion?
- 41. Do I use artificial contraception or birth control?
- 42. Have I entertained thoughts of suicide, desired to commit suicide, or attempted suicide?
- 43. Have I participated in euthanasia or assisted suicide?
- 44. Have I placed others in harms way, by driving or texting inappropriately?
- 45. Have I failed to help someone in danger or in need?
- 46. Do I drink or smoke excessively or abuse prescribed drugs?
- 47. Have I wished evil on anyone?
- 48. Do I deliberately harbor unkind and revengeful thoughts about others?
- 49. Have I taken revenge?
- 50. Have I used harsh or abusive language toward others?
- 51. Have I spread gloom through my words and actions?
- 52. Is there anyone with whom I refuse to speak, or against whom I bear a grudge?
- 53. Have I taken pleasure in anyone’s misfortunes?
- 54. Have I led others into sin?

“You shall not commit adultery” and “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife”

- 55. Did I commit impure acts with another - fornication (premarital sex) or adultery (sex with a married person)?
- 56. Did I commit impure acts by myself (masturbation)?
- 57. Do I engage in homosexual acts?
- 58. Have I refused my spouse the marriage right without good reason?
- 59. Am I dating someone who is civilly divorced but still bound by a valid marriage?
- 60. Did I marry or advise anyone to marry outside the Catholic Church?
- 61. Have I willfully entertained impure thoughts or desires?
- 62. Did I respect all members of the opposite sex, or have I objectified them?
- 63. Have I read, listened to, viewed, or spoken of impure things?
- 64. Have I worn revealing or immodest clothing?
- 65. Have I succumbed occasions of impurity?

“You shall not steal.”

- 66. Have I stolen money or property?
- 67. Have I cheated?
- 68. Have I failed to make restitution for what I stole?
- 69. Have I intentionally damaged property?
- 70. Have I accepted or bought stolen property?
- 71. Have I helped someone steal?
- 72. Am I dishonest in my business dealings?
- 73. Have I failed to make restitution for my stealing, cheating and frauds?

- 74. Do I gamble excessively?
- 75. Have I borrowed without permission?
- 76. Have I failed to return things borrowed?
- 77. Did I waste time at work, school or at home?
- 78. Have I cheated my employer of an honest day's work?
- 79. Have I cheated my employees of their wages?
- 80. Have I refused or neglected to help anyone in urgent need?

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

81.

Have I lied deliberately?

- 82. Have I deliberately misled or deceived anyone?
- 83. Did I gossip or reveal others' faults or sins?
- 84. Have I failed to keep promises or oaths?
- 85. Have I signed false documents?
- 86. Have I failed to prevent the defamation of another's character?
- 87. Have I revealed secrets and betrayed trust?
- 88. Do I make false judgments and harbor false suspicions?
- 89. Have I failed to forgive someone or held a grudge?
- 90. Have I failed to apologize or make amends?
- 91. Did I fail to keep secret what should be confidential?
- 92. Have I disclosed another's sins without serious reason?

"You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor."

- 93. Am I greedy or selfish?
- 94. Am I envious of someone's possessions, talents, or blessings?
- 95. Do I indulge in self-pity?
- 96. Am I proud, vain, or desire to be praised?
- 97. Have I exaggerated my success?
- 98. Have I minimized or made excuses for my failures?
- 99. Have I measured my charity by what others have given, rather than my ability to give?

Going to confession can be overwhelming and uncomfortable. This list of questions is extensive and can be daunting. It can be hard to say out loud the things in our lives that we have done wrong. Rather than looking down upon your failings, let the sorrow for sin help you overcome them. Look upon this sacrament as an opportunity to make full reparation for your sins, and restore your soul's relationship with God. If you are reluctant to go to confession remember God's mercy and compassion.

"Though your sins be like scarlet, they shall become white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall become white as wool." (Isiah 1:18)

Remember, Christ came into the world to save sinners!