

MARCH 13, 2022
2nd Sunday of Lent
Genesis 15: 5-12, 17-18; Philippians 3: 17-4: 1; Luke 4: 1-13

“TRANSFORM ME, LORD!”

“The epic film *Les Miserables*, based on the Victor Hugo novel and the international stage sensation, is a story of grace and redemption, of compassion and mercy. The story begins with a simple but profound moment of forgiveness. Jean Valjean has been imprisoned for stealing a small loaf of bread to feed his sister’s daughter. Paroled after 20 years of hard labor and brutal treatment, Valjean is a broken, bitter man. He is desperate for work, but no one will hire a parolee. Cold and hungry, he is taken in by a kindly bishop. During the night, Valjean steals the bishop’s silver plate and flees, but he is quickly taken into custody by the local police. The constables bring Valjean to the bishop’s residence and ask the bishop to identify the thief and his silver. Indeed, it is his silver, the Monseigneur says — but the bishop explains that he gave Valjean the silver. He thanks the police for bringing Valjean to him because he was concerned that Valjean forget to take the valuable candlesticks, as well. Valjean is stunned by the bishop’s extraordinary kindness and forgiveness. The bishop only asks Valjean to use the silver to re-create his life and return God’s goodness to others. ‘God has raised you out of darkness,’ the bishop blesses Valjean. ‘I have bought your soul for God.’ It is a moment of transformation for Valjean, who rediscovers within himself the love and mercy that led him to steal bread for his hungry niece. As he turns the collection of silver into a fortune that will benefit many, Valjean comes to realize that ‘to love another person is to see the face of God.’”¹

My dear sisters and brothers, there are moments in our lives that we are in the dark, people see us as hopeless and can not regain our strength and the light of new life.

¹ stories4homilies.blogspot.com

We too are desperate and see ourselves no way to change. But there are still people willing to help us despite our inadequacies and sinfulness. These people are considered the light at the end of the tunnel, we just need to be hopeful and believe in God, ourselves, and others.

In our first reading, we heard Abram, a man who trusted and believed in God's promises. At his old age and exhausted, he is willing to go on to the land God promised to him. When he has no child, he trusts that God will give him numerous children like the stars in heaven. His unwavering faith and trust rewarded Abram because God's promises always happen. God's promises are never broken, and His words are true and will realized in His own time. He is our God, the faithful One. Abram experienced transformation not only his name was change from Abram to Abraham but most importantly, his life and destiny from being childless to become the father of many nations. While St. Paul reminded us in the second reading, that heaven is our home, that Christ is expecting us and we need to stand firm on the Cross of Christ.

In our gospel, Jesus was transfigured to the three apostles while He was praying. His face changed, and His cloth became brilliant and dazzling white. "Today's Gospel reminds us that Jesus went with Peter, James, and John up the mountain to pray. Perhaps, while it is necessary to spend time alone in prayer, it is equally important that we spend time in community prayer. Firstly, the gospel is telling us, Jesus is transformed in a moment of prayer. Prayer can and does transform our lives in more ways than we can dream of. Secondly, when God enters our life, He does not transform the situation we are in but transforms us so that we can deal with the situation. Peter's impulsive suggestion to the Lord that they build three tents perhaps points to our very human need to hold on and to prolong the good times. We want the good moments to last, and we don't want to face the reality that life is made up of the good and the not-so-good moments as well, they are all part of God's plan for us, and if we are ready to enjoy the

good, we have to be prepared to face the unpleasant as well. On the other hand, the idea of building a tent could remind us that our life and our faith is a journey, where nothing is permanent. Lastly the Gospel tells us that from the cloud came a voice saying: 'This is my Son, the Chosen one, Listen to Him.' Yes, Jesus is the well-beloved Son of the Father. But we too can hear the Father saying to us 'You are my chosen one!' We can hear this voice because God has made a promise, He has made us a covenant, but more than inheritors of the covenant, we have the privilege of being His sons and daughters and He never goes back on His choice! With confidence we can face any trial and carry any burden because we will always be the favoured ones, thanks to Jesus through whom we can call God our Father! The kindness of the bishop is a moment of transfiguration for Valjean: As the three disciples behold the divinity that radiates from the vision of Jesus on the mountaintop, Valjean realizes the ember of God's goodness that has continued to burn within him despite the brutality and cruelty of his two decades in prison. That same touch of divinity exists within each one of us, as well: God is present within us, animating us to do good and holy things; guiding our steps as we try to walk justly and humbly in the ways of God; enlightening our vision with wisdom and selflessness to bring the justice and mercy of God into our world. The challenge of discipleship is to allow the love of God within us to 'transfigure' despair into hope, sadness into joy, anguish into healing, estrangement into the community."² My brothers and sisters, we can transform and through us, we may transform others.

Let this be our prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, let me see you glory and keep me alert to your presence as I journey with my Lenten observance. Keep me strong and may your light and transfiguration bring to my own transformation and be an instrument of change, hope, faith and love through my kind words and actions. Amen."

² ibid

