

HOMILY ON THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

A discussion ensued between a twin foetus), one a male the other a female. The female told her twin brother, I think there is another world outside where are, a place that would be better than this place, a place where there would be light. But her brother refused to believe her, rather he tried to convince her to be content with where they were as no other place could possibly exist outside the dark womb where they found themselves. The female twin was so convinced that there is another world different from where they were but could not convince her brother, she paused a little and told her brother, 'I have something else to say but I am afraid you wouldn't believe me, her brother asked her to continue. She said, 'I think there is a mother.' At this point her brother became furious with her saying 'I have told you to stop dreaming, neither you nor I have seen, touched or even heard about a mother, I wonder how the idea came into you mind.' Finally, the little girl asked her brother, 'are you not feeling any pressure?' Her brother responded, 'I do' but asked, 'what has pressure to do with mother?' The little girl said, 'I feel this pressure is there to get us ready for another place much more beautiful than this, where we can see our mother face to face!

Another story was told of a monk who was imagining the type of joy one would likely relish in heaven if there would neither be food nor drink. He said to himself 'if after denying myself all these pleasure here on earth for the sake of heaven and there is eventually no food and no drink in heaven, what then will constitute my joy if I eventually get there? He made it a point of meditation. One day he went into the desert and climbed on the tree to contemplate his new idea. God sent a bird above him singing a melodious hymn although he was enjoying the hymn, he did not see the bird. He kept nodding his head for the whole day, one week, for a month without food, a year and the bird was still singing. The bird kept singing for sixty – five years to the relishment and pleasure of the monk, and without him getting tired or hungry. After this the Lord recalled the bird. It was at the disappearance of the bird that the holy monk came back to his consciousness. It took him time to recollect where he was, what took him to the place, where he came from and when he went there. He began to trace his way back to the monastery only to discover that many of his colleagues were already dead and that his own funeral had been celebrated many years back as the monks thought that the wild beast might have feasted on him in the desert where he went to pray.

In today's reading we see Abraham demonstrate his unrivaled faith, in the Lord whom he had never seen but whom he believed existed. Earlier God had promised him that He was going to make his descendants as many as the grain of sand or stars in the sky. Now Abraham had no child save Isaac, a son of his old age, but testing his faith and confidence in Him, God asked him to go to Moriah to sacrifice that only child of his for Him. Without hesitation or even asking any questions, he set out to carry out the injunctions of the Lord. This sacrifice was to prefigure the supreme sacrifice that Christ was going to offer in Mt. Calvary for our sins. This Abrahamic kind of trust cannot be reposed on human being. It requires a very deep relationship with God for one to be given such faith. Till today, Abraham remains the model of faith and trust in God. God requires from us such solid and unwavering faith in Him. Our belief or faith, determines to a great extent, our action. If like the little girl in the first story, we believe in the God who though exists is invisible, and His teaching that there is life after death where the righteous are rewarded with everlasting life, our action would be geared towards decency aiming doing His will so as to be admitted into His kingdom at all cost.

Similarly, St. Paul in the second reading enjoined us to tread with confidence since we have the maker of the universe as Father and the redeemer of the world as our brother. If we express that Abrahamic faith and confidence in Him and consequently win His friendship, the entire universe would be under our feet and we shall need to fear nothing, for our Father (God) and our Brother (Christ) will always stand by us and we shall always be victorious.

The transfiguration of Christ as we see in the gospel reading of today; Jesus took with Him Peter, James and John and went to Mt. Tabor to pray. In the gospel of Mk. 6:31, the scripture said that He and His disciples rarely have time to eat. But He will always steal out time to go to a private place to consult with His Father to know whether He was still at the right track and to discuss the next point of action to be taken with His Father. Sometimes He will have to sacrifice His sleep and rest in order to do this (Lk. 6:12). This was to tell us nothing should take the place of prayer in our lives if ever we want to succeed and to accomplish the will of God. In this Lenten season, more than any other, prayer is of paramount importance to every Christian. We be fingering our prayer wherever we go, our activities should be

turned into prayer. Often we may think that we are doing very well either in the area of employment, assignment entrusted unto us or even in our spiritual advancement, there is always the need to consult. This consultation with the one whom one is working for, for the approval of one action or to know the next thing to do or thank him for favour received is called prayer. St. Augustine said that anyone who is too busy that he has no time to pray is busier than God wants him to be. If we are in love with God and our Lady we will always yearn to be with them and that we can do through prayer. If you are not in constant communion with the leader, there may be a new discovery, a new assignment, a new development etc. which may not be known to you and you may be in the wrong place doing wrong thing at the wrong time and wrong place. If we are to work out our salvation in fear and trembling as St. Paul advised (Phil. 2:12), we must always consult with the one for whom we are working that is, we must be committed to prayer in season and out of season (2Tim. 4:2).

Jesus went to pray to prepare Himself for the great dreadful ordeal ahead, Moses and Elijah appeared to Him; representing the law and the prophet respectively. Christ is the fulfilment of both the law and the prophet and the two representatives had to come at that critical moment to encourage Him to keep going. Of when the going become tough we heavenly visitation to encourage and urge us on, but this can only be possible if we can pray.

His transfiguration was a sign of hope to the three apostles and indeed to every Christian, that there is life after death and that we are all going to be transformed. Like in the second story, Peter, like any of the other two, was overwhelmed and never wanted them to leave that awesome and relishing presence of the Lord, hence the statement, 'it good for us to be here let us build three tents...' the presence of the Lord gives the kind of satisfaction that no created thing can give.

Finally, the voice of the Lord was heard, 'this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, listen to Him. This statement is a strong one confirming the Son-ship of Christ for those who may tend to doubt it. The Father also commanded us to listen to whatever He, the Son, may tell us. The statement is pregnant with meaning. When He says that we should listen to Him He mean that we should obey His teaching. It is a call to all who wish to be saved to correspond their lives with the teachings of Christ and accept His teaching even when do not understand it.