



Second Sunday of Lent

The person of Jesus Christ, and his message of Good News

Opening Prayer



Loving and gracious God,

Your Son so loved the world that He gave Himself up to death for our sake. Grant us the grace to receive this love through our personal encounter with Jesus and to proclaim Him as our beginning and end. May each member of the community of the Church in Broken Bay be one in Christ and experience the promise of abundant life.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Introduction



“In the moment of personal encounter, Jesus Christ was alive and living. He met me where I was, he accompanied me on the pathway, and he called me to himself. In the encounter, Jesus did not judge me, nor did he burden me. As he did to so many others before me, Jesus forgave me and liberated me. He loved me. The personal encounter was an invitation to life with Christ. It was a call to conversion, to turn away from sin and believe in the

Good News.” (Bishop Anthony’s Pastoral Letter, *Jesus Christ, our beginning and end*)

Jesus is at the very heart of the Christian faith. As fully-God and fully-human, Jesus uniquely takes His place as the one who restores our relationship with God through His life, death and resurrection. Through Him we gain a share in the fullness of His new life both now and in eternity. Each of us is invited into a relationship with Jesus that is personal. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we can know Jesus both personally and as the Church community, which is the Body of Christ.

Gospel Reading



Audio: Week 2 Gospel Reading



Mark 9:2-10

Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves.

And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

Then Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for

Moses, and one for Elijah.” He did not know what to say, for they were terrified.

Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, He ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean.

Pause for reflection.

You are invited to share a thought, feeling or insight that is arising in you as you hear this Gospel text today. Simply listen to each person, with no comment at this stage.

Reflection - Pina Bernard

Team Leader,
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Have you ever experienced a sense of being overwhelmed by God? Perhaps it was a spectacular sunrise over the ocean at one of the many beautiful beaches in our Diocese; or perhaps it was the very first glimpse of a

newborn child, reflecting the wonder of God’s creation.

Thomas Merton, the American Trappist monk (d. 1968), experienced a moment such as this in 1958 - a moment of deep insight in the middle of the ordinariness of an inner-city street.

He describes his experience in this way: *“I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realisation that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers.*

... I have the immense joy of being man, a member of a race in which God Himself became incarnate. As if the sorrows and stupidities of the human condition could overwhelm me, now I realise what we all are. And if only everybody could realise this! But it cannot be explained. There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun.

... It was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts, where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God’s eyes.” (Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander, 1968)

Merton’s remarkable experience was a moment of grace, where he caught a glimpse of a deeper reality that he had not been able to perceive before. He saw what was familiar in a transformed light. Indeed, you could

say that he saw with God's eyes the core essence that united each human being made in the image of God.

In a similar way in this week's Transfiguration text, Peter, James and John experience a moment of clarity and revelation as they see a new reality of Jesus. This is a powerful experience right at the time when Jesus begins to tell them that he is to suffer, die and rise again. We can imagine the confusion the disciples felt as they tried to come to terms with what Jesus was trying to tell them, his closest companions. Surely this revelation would have sustained them in the challenging times that awaited them.

Thankfully, we have a God who desires to reveal himself to us. I am reminded of the passage in the book of Revelation (Rev 3:20) where Jesus is standing at the door of our hearts and lives, knocking and inviting us to open the door to allow him to enter. Jesus is not aloof and far from us, but rather is very close, calling us into relationship.

At the heart of this relationship is the common thread that binds us together, the Good News of Jesus that we need to keep hearing again and again. This 'Gospel kerygma' or 'proclamation of the Good News' has been described by St John Paul II as "the initial ardent proclamation by which a person is one day overwhelmed and brought to the decision to entrust himself to Jesus Christ by faith." (*Catechesi Tradendae*, 25)

What is this proclamation that should overwhelm us? It is the Good News that "Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you." (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 164)

Hearing this Good News, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, can 'overwhelm' us as we come to realise more and more deeply who Jesus is and the salvation that he offers us through his life, death and resurrection. Our response, as St John Paul II indicates, is to make a decision to say 'yes' to choose to follow Jesus as his disciple. This needs to be intentional. We also need to surrender and entrust ourselves to Jesus, accepting his way and not our own.

As we embark on this path of growing in discipleship, we grow in holiness as we seek to conform ourselves gradually to Christ. Along the way, we can encounter Christ and experience new insights. We encounter Christ in our heart-to-heart prayer, which is the foundation of our relationship. We also meet Christ in the Liturgy and in graced moments of encounter in the Sacraments; in the homily and through the ministry of the priest; in the words of our sacred Scriptures; through sharing our faith and witnessing to each other in our faith community; and in our selfless service of others. Within each of these experiences can lie real moments of revelation for us, as we may be given the grace to see with God's eyes. It is through the Holy Spirit that we come

to understand who Jesus truly is; as well as coming to see the divine spark that is in each person.

As we grow in holiness, we also grow in being missionary. The joy of our experience of faith in Christ starts to spill out to those around us. Unlike the disciples in today's Gospel, we are meant to tell the Good News of Jesus to everyone. It's not a secret to be kept to ourselves.

It is in this way, as each person grows in discipleship, holiness and mission, that our parishes and Movements are slowly transformed to be what they are called to be; communities who are one in Christ and who take the message of the Gospel to the world.

Reflection Questions for Discussion:



1. Share and discuss your insights from listening to the Gospel text and the accompanying reflection.
2. How would you describe the 'Good News' of Jesus? What does it mean to you?
3. How would you describe your relationship with Jesus? In what ways are you a disciple of Jesus?
4. Can you share a personal encounter with Jesus that you have experienced?

A Personal Story



Audio:

Week 2 Personal Story – Charbel Raish



Charbel Raish offers us a personal reflection on the importance of Jesus and his message of Good News is his life.

Charbel is a parishioner at Arcadia parish and is married with seven children. Charbel is the founder of Parousia Media which was born in May of 2005. He has organised over 200 local events consisting of local and international speakers who have featured all over Australia. Charbel has a passion for helping people get closer to discovering the fullness of the Truth.

Listen to the testimony, and use the following questions to discuss:



1. What aspects of Jesus' message of Good News in Charbel's life spoke to you most deeply?
2. How is this story inspiring you to place Jesus and his Good News at the centre of your life?
3. How could your parish / school / agency / community more intentionally place Jesus and his Good News at the centre of all its activities?

Response



What is your response to what you have heard and discussed during this session?
What initiatives are you being called to action, both personally and communally?
You are invited to share and discuss your response with another person.

**Lord, be the beginning and end
of all we do and say.
Prompt our actions with your grace,
and complete them with your all-powerful help.
Through Christ our Lord.
AMEN.**

