

Fr. Nick Dant's Homily, Saint Matthew Catholic Church, Indianapolis
Second Sunday of Lent, Feb. 27-28, 2021, Cycle B

This weekend, with the story of the Transfiguration of Jesus, Peter, James, and John we are given a little taste of Easter Glory. So enthusiastic were Peter, James, and John about the transfigured Jesus, they wanted to maintain their mountain top experience forever and not leave. Peter says to Jesus: "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! 'Let us' stay and' make three tents: one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah."

However, there is a "catch," Easter Glory, while indeed a gift from God, does not come cheap! Easter Glory – our transfiguration – only comes by traveling a long, hard difficult road – the road that leads to the Cross. So, out of the cloud that surrounds Peter and his companions God booms: "This (transfigured one) is my beloved Son. Listen to Him." And what does Jesus say to us? He says: "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it." So, the disciples had to leave their mountain top experience and return to the world – a world where many struggles awaited them – and so do we! We must continue on our Lenten Journey to Jerusalem, deny ourselves, take up our cross and walk in the footsteps of Jesus. For only following in the path of Jesus, the footsteps of self-denial – dying to ourselves – lead to Easter Glory.

We have to remember how Lent began: Jesus called us to repentance – where we literally lose our lives of sin and self-centeredness. On the First Sunday of Lent Jesus came out of the desert proclaiming: "The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." Self-denial, losing ourselves for the sake of the Gospel, involves repentance, turning ourselves around and following Jesus. Living the cross. Taking up our cross means I stop living selfishly for myself, and live for God and others. The New World of Easter Glory is God and other centered, not me centered! As Jesus said: "Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it." If I live only for myself, I will ironically destroy myself – and will never see the glory I so desperately seek in my selfishness.

During Lent, we are challenged to take a hard look at ourselves and try to root out the sin that stands in the way of denying myself and taking up my cross. The Sacrament of Reconciliation provides us with a wonderful opportunity for repentance – putting ourselves on that of becoming God and other centered rather than me centered.

Please do, during this Lenten season, celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, name the sin in your life and repent.

A great opportunity to celebrate the sacrament is every Friday of Lent right after the 6:00PM Stations of the Cross, until 7:30PM. Also every Saturday before Mass from 4:00 until 4:30 PM. So, I encourage you to come, repent, follow Jesus on the road to dying to yourself for God and others, the only road that leads to transfigured glory!