

Cycle A Lent 2 Homily -- March 19-20, 2011
Matthew 17:1-9

There are so many things people talk about when you mention the word Lent.

Some talk about giving things up.

Others discuss something extra they are going to do.

We hear some people talk about going to Stations of the Cross, attending Masses they would not usually attend when it is not Lent, or volunteering to help where help is especially needed.

Now that we've reached the Second Sunday of Lent, it is a good time to ask that old, old question. What am I doing about Lent?

In his parish newsletter, one of our neighboring clergymen took a deeper look at this. Father Don Hall is the Rector of St. Luke Episcopal Church, our neighboring church just west of us on Robbins Avenue. He wrote:

The old, old Lenten question was, "What are you giving up for Lent?"

Father Hall continues: "I would like to ask a different question, "What are you planting for Lent, Easter, and beyond?"

- *If you plant honesty, you will reap trust.
 - *If you plant goodness, you will reap friends.
 - *If you plant humility, you will reap greatness.
 - *If you plant perseverance, you will reap contentment.
 - *If you plant consideration, you will reap perspective.
 - *If you plant hard work, you will reap success.
 - *If you plant forgiveness, you will reap reconciliation.
 - *If you plant love, you will reap love in return.
 - *If you have planted a deep relationship with Christ, you will reap love for eternity and being with all of those whom you have loved forever.
- "What are you giving up for Lent?"

I ask a different question, "What are you planting for Lent, Easter, and beyond?"
(*We thank Father Donald Hall of St. Luke Episcopal Church in Niles, Ohio, for contributing to this reflection.*)

Certainly, the question raised in the article encompasses much more than the question we asked as Lent began. So, might we prayerfully consider: **What are we planting as Lent continues, as Easter draws closer, and beyond these sacred seasons?**

This Second Sunday of Lent features Matthew's Gospel account of the Transfiguration of Jesus. The author Patricia Farris wrote so beautifully about this (in an article published in 2002 in a magazine known as *The Christian Century*.) The Gospel focuses on the face of Jesus. Patricia Farris helps ponder this face in such a practical way when she wrote:

"In the transfigured face of Christ, God's light shines in our lives as well. Through grief and fear, doubt and cynicism, violence and war, suffering and death, our way is illumined by the holy light of God's presence and love."

Think about that. In the very face of Jesus, God's light shines in our lives as well.

Are we grieving the loss of a loved one? Are we afraid of what the future holds in store? **Let the holy light of God's presence and love shine on us, as we let this holy light and presence shine on others who are grieving and on others who are afraid.**

Do we have doubts and are we cynical about the world around us? **Let the holy light of God's presence and love shine on us, as we let this light shine through us on others who have doubts and others who don't trust the world around them.**

Are we suffering, or close to those whose loved ones are in pain and whose quality of life is rapidly diminishing? **Let the holy light of God's presence and love shine on us, as we let this light shine through us on others whose loved ones are suffering and others who experience the nearness of death.**

The voice from the cloud in today's Gospel told us to listen to Jesus.

As Lent continues, we'll perceive this voice in our own hearts. It will invite us to look at the face of Jesus. And it will remind us to listen to Jesus. If we take the time to let this voice resound in our hearts, it will keep asking us to tell the Lord **what we are planting as Lent continues, as Easter draws closer, and beyond these sacred seasons!**