

Glimpse the presence of God
Second Sunday of Lent
Fr. Mike Galbraith

“Twins, a sister and brother were talking to each other in the womb. The little sister said to the little brother, ‘I believe that there is life after birth!’ Her brother protested: ‘No, no, this is all there is. This is a dark and cozy place, and we have nothing else to do but to cling on to the chord that feeds us.’ But the little girl insisted: ‘There must be something more than this dark place, there must be something else where there is light and freedom to move.’ Still she could not convince her twin brother. Then, after some silence, she said hesitantly: ‘I have something else to say, and I am afraid you won’t believe that either, but I think there is a mother!’ Her little brother now became furious: ‘A mother, a mother, what are you talking about? I have never seen a mother and neither have you. Who put that idea in your head? As I told you, this place is all we have so let’s be content.’ The little sister finally said: ‘Don’t you feel this pressure sometimes? It’s really unpleasant and sometimes even painful.’ ‘Yes,’ he answered, ‘what’s special about that?’ ‘Well,’ the sister said, ‘I think this pressure is there to get us ready for another place, much more beautiful than this, where we will see our mother face to face! Don’t you think that’s exciting!’”

In that story the twin brother did not believe there was anything beyond what he could see and hear and touch while his twin sister believed there was a life beyond what she could see and hear and touch. That story reminds me of life. We are like the twin sister, we say “we are only passing through,” meaning that this life is preparing for eternal life. We live in strange times with lots of tragedies and appalling accidents and many people dying young. During times like this we need more than ever to remember that our lives here on earth are a pilgrimage to God. We are sons and daughters of our heavenly Father since baptism. Like the girl in the womb who could not see her mother, we to believe that eternal life follows this life and that there is more to this life than we can see and hear and touch.

On the mountain Peter, James and John saw that there was more to Jesus than met the eye. During the transfiguration they got a glimpse of the future glory of Jesus’ resurrection. Like them we too get glimpses of the presence of God in our lives. We get glimpses of God in the love we receive from other people. We get glimpses of God when badly needed help suddenly comes to us from out of nowhere. We get glimpses of God when we look back over our lives and what we couldn’t understand in the past makes sense now. We see glimpses of God when we see someone making a sacrifice to help somebody else. We see glimpses of God in the beauty of a fine day, a nice beach or a beautiful sunrise or sunset. We see glimpses of God when a passage from the Bible or a homily strikes a chord in our hearts. We get a glimpse of God when we spend time in prayer and experience the loving presence of God in our lives. We get more than just a glimpse of God when we receive the body of Jesus in Holy Communion. The Transfiguration coming early in Lent encourages us to continue our Lenten penances because it reminds us of the glory of Jesus risen from the dead.

When Jesus and the disciples came down the mountain Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone about his transfiguration until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. Of course, they did not know what he meant. Unknown to them the glory of Jesus’ transfiguration was preparing them to accept the scandal of the cross. They would understand this only afterwards when looking back. The good times take us through the bad times. So, when our cross is heavy or when we are tempted to despair about the meaning of life, let us look beyond the pain of the present moment and remember those times when we got glimpses of God, those times when God sent us his consolations. Let us look beyond the pain of life and see the presence of God in our world, and the offer of life that God wants to make to each of us. Let us look beyond the illusion of happiness that this life offers to the real happiness that God offers us. Let us look beyond this world to eternal life with God.

Fr. Mike