

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent, Cycle C February 28, 2010

Readings: Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18; Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 9:28b-36

### Heavenly Vision

As I have mentioned before, I live at the end of a dead-end street. Across the street from me are the practice fields for the high school football team. On the dead-end side of our property are the community softball diamonds. In the evening, after all the games and practices are over it is a pretty quiet country setting. It is quiet, but it is doesn't get very dark. There is an equipment storage building just the other side of the fence at the end of the road. Because it has suffered some theft and vandalism they have installed a very bright security light that turns on at night; it must be 1000 watts or more. Every night is as bright as if there were a full moon, except the light comes from the ground not from the sky. The resulting light pollution prevents me from getting a very clear view of the night sky. It's not like being out in the middle of the wilderness or being back in the time of Abraham.

In our reading from Genesis, God tells Abraham to: ***“Look up at the sky and count the stars.”*** If Abraham were standing in my front yard, he wouldn't have seen very much because of the light pollution. And for us, there are often times when God tries to show us things, but our vision is blocked or distorted by things that pollute our lives. We have our own light pollution of sorts. To see the things that God wants to show us we must have eyes of faith that can see clearly.

Abraham was physically able to see the uncountable number of stars in the night sky, but he still needed eyes of faith to believe God's promise that his descendants would be as numerous as those stars. Abraham was already in his nineties, and his wife Sarah was in her eighties, and they had no children. Yet, Abraham did not doubt God. And because of his faith he was accounted as being righteous.

Lent is a time to grow in faith and hopefully God will account us as being righteous. It is a time to eliminate some of the pollution that interferes with our communications with God; our ability to see what He is trying to show us and our ability to hear what He is trying to tell us.

St. Paul warns us this morning of those that: ***“conduct themselves as enemies of the cross of Christ.”*** What does Paul say about these people, these enemies of the cross of Christ? He says: ***“Their end is destruction. Their god is their stomach; their glory is in their ‘shame.’ Their minds are occupied with earthly things.”***

We need to reflect on how much our minds are occupied with earthly things. Are we enemies of the cross of Christ? What are the false gods in our lives that we need to distance ourselves from? Are food, drink, money, politics, sports, television, the Internet, or texting things that interfere with our willingness to spend time with God and to pick up our crosses and follow Christ? If so, then Lent is a great time to clear our vision by removing these distractions. Do we glory in our shame as Paul mentions? That is, do we brag and take pride regarding things that should really makes us blush and be ashamed? Do we tell stories about how we got even with someone or made them look ridiculous? Do we try to build up our egos at the expense of others? Do we brag about how we got

away with cheating at sports, on a test, or on our taxes? Do we take pride in being able to do as little as possible at school or work or at home? Are we smug because we have more than we need while others suffer to make ends meet? If any of these apply, then Lent is a great time to put them in perspective.

We take this special time of Lent to try to clear our eyes of faith to see the wonders of the heavens. We need to eliminate the pollution in our earthly lives to be able to see not the heavenly stars, but to imagine heaven itself. Heaven is our true home, we are only visitors here. St. Paul says this morning: ***“Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body by the power that enables him also to bring all things into subjection to himself.”*** We hear elsewhere in scriptures that we await: ***“What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him.”*** (1 Cor. 2:9)

We await great things that we cannot see or hear, and which are unimaginable to us in our humanity. And so we need strong faith. We need to grow in righteousness. We need to make sacrifices on our earthly journeys to help prepare and dispose us to be ready for our journey to heaven. The more we have grown in holiness while we walk this earth, the shorter our journey will be in purgatory as we hopefully complete our trip to heaven. In heaven we will see God face-to-face, but first our hearts must be pure.

Use this season of Lent to purify your hearts, to make sure that you are on the right track, that you are becoming holier and growing closer to God, and not moving in the wrong direction. Staying in the same place, or even worse, moving in the wrong direction, are truly tragic options for that time when your earthly life ends. That time when you return to the dust from which you were created. Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return.

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