

28 February 2010

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

LET US DRAW NEAR TO THE GLORY

READINGS: Gn. 15:5-12.17-18; Ps. 26; Phil. 3:17 - 4:1; Lk. 9:28b-36

From the Gospel according to Luke

[Jesus] took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white. And behold, two men talked with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, and when they wakened they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah"- not knowing what he said. As he said this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silence and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

LET'S DUST OFF AGAIN OUR FEAR

Before the Transfiguration of the Lord, the three disciples who climbed the mountain with Jesus felt fear. It was the fear that comes to one who draws near to the Divine. It is a healthy fear, one we should welcome. God did not say to Peter, James and John "Do not fear", like he did with his prophets, with Mary, and with Peter himself on the day of the miraculous catch of fish. In these situations, those who were called experienced fear from within their own hearts: they were afraid they could not resist, that they would be overwhelmed by the weight of their unworthiness and limitations.

But on Tabor, fear came from the awareness of the Glory, and therefore it was a blessed fear. It was blessed because it helped them to put to one side that false familiarity that we think we have with God; blessed because, as with every fear, it made them pay attention. When we find ourselves in a dark and insecure place, we experience fear and instinctively our hearing becomes more acute; all this so as not to be surprised by the enemy. The fear on Tabor makes us pay attention. It is because of this that we can listen attentively to the Words of the Father: "This is my Son, listen to him".

Let us dust off our fear not to use it as a block or an alibi, but as an emotion that begs us to take the Word seriously. God is mercy, but God is not playing with us. We are not God's playthings. We are chosen and consecrated to climb the mountain, to rejoice in the Glory, so that then we will reflect it as if we were a mirror (Paul would say). We are afraid of losing many useless things. What we need to really fear is losing the essentials. Let us draw near to the Glory with that holy fear of not being able to hear what the Master wants to tell us. Let us make our daily visits with less sham naturalness and more fear of God. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to pour out on us the gift of fear. The fear of Tabor, only that.

Father Giuseppe Forlai, igs

Prayer

*Lord, solitude makes us afraid.
It is like a void that sucks us in,
that we want to fight off with every means possible.
But there are moments in which we cannot not be alone:
when trial touches us, when we must choose,
when we are lost in a dark forest within and without,
there, we are alone.
On days like that, Lord, do not let our empty hands turn into fists
but make them pull us toward You
so that once again they will be instruments of Your love
for all those whom we love and who stand by us.*