

2nd Sunday Lent (B)

- I'm sure you've all seen & possibly experienced occasions when a team wins a grand final, or when individuals complete some great achievement, & they're overcome with euphoria.
- Then, if they're interviewed, they inevitably say something like – "It hasn't sunk in yet".
- And it is not just in sports or achievements; when the apple fell on Isaac Newton's head, he cried out – "Eureka, I've got it" – he knew he had the key to begin working out his Laws of Motion, but it was just the beginning.
- We have an extraordinary "Eureka" moment in the 1st reading when for the first time in human history there is the realisation in a religion that God does not want human sacrifice - & so a religion emerges from the outset, founded on the faith of Abraham, that authentic religion will never demand human sacrifice.
- In the Gospel today, Jesus' leading disciples have a Eureka moment.
- In their presence Jesus is transfigured & they have a peep at the divinity of their teacher, but then they're told not to reveal what they've experienced until after the Son of Man has risen from the dead.
- And it is only after that happens that the significance of what they've experienced in the transfiguration makes sense – it is only then that they fully understand.
- But before that they discussed among themselves, they thought about it, but more importantly, they listened to what the Father said & they became open to having their experience clarified beyond the euphoria.
- In past years most people looked to religion for the meaning of life, & the guiding principles for living sensibly & responsibly.
- Today many people feel they don't need God; religion for many has become irrelevant to their lives; they can face their life, their desires, their fears & expectations by themselves, but that's not easy to do.
- It has probably never been harder than it is today to stop & think, reflect, & make decisions about oneself & what matters in one's life.
- We live in the midst of what has been called a *culture of intranscendence*, tied down to the "here & now", living only for today, unable to open up to the ultimate mystery of life.
- We live in an *entertainment culture* that pulls people out of themselves, forcing them to forget about the great questions they carry in their hearts – robbing them of accessing true meaning & fulfilment in life.
- From every quarter we're enticed to believe that only the things accessible in the here & now are of value; only those things that can be bought or bargained-for are the way to happiness.

- If they do find happiness, then good, but for too many the seeking of things they believe will bring them happiness corrupts them & they are prepared to inflict unbelievable pain & suffering on others in order to get them.
- People today have learned many things; they know what's happening in the world around them, they have access to an incredible store of knowledge, facts & opinions about things, BUT they don't know themselves, nor do they know how to become free from things that control them & all too often they don't even know that they aren't free until something drastic happens in their lives.
- The director of La Croix, the Catholic newspaper in Paris - George Hourdin, made this gloomy observation a few years ago:
Human beings today are becoming incapable of loving, of being free, of judging for themselves, of changing their way of life. They are becoming trained robots who work to earn money, which they will then spend at vacation resorts. They read the same fashion magazines & watch the same television programs as everyone else. That is how they learn who they are, what they want, & how they should think & live.
- More than ever we need to hear what God says of Jesus: "*This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!*"
- Listen to him! Don't listen to anyone else.
- We need to stop, be silent, & listen to the God revealed in Jesus.
- That inner listening helps us to live in the truth, to taste life rather than waste it, not to skim over what is essential.
- By listening to God incarnate in Jesus we discover our own smallness & poverty, but also the greatness that comes from being infinitely loved by him: Each of us is free to listen to God or turn away.
- Whatever we do, let us not forget this scandalous, countercultural truth: to live without ultimate meaning is to live a meaning-less life; to act without hearing the inner voice of our consciousness that God can break into, is to be un-conscious.
- God has made wonderful promises to us by the very fact that we have received life - trust this truth, & we will find the courage not to cling to anything or to anyone so tightly that we are not willing to let them go when God calls us to do so; do not fear that God wants us to be unhappy, or that he is playing games with us.
- Jesus came, as he said, that we might find life & live it to the full.
- Whatever accidents or tragedies may happen to us in this uncertain world, one thing is certain: We are made for love & for a love that lasts eternally.
- Jesus trusted that this is so & the Transfiguration is God's assurance to him & to us that Jesus is right.
- Let us place our lives trustingly in God's loving care.