Lent 2A 2017

Peter, James and John were privileged to see Jesus in the company of two towering figures. Moses, who received the commandments on the summit of Mount Sinai and Elijah who met with God on another mountain; not in a mighty wind or earthquake but in the gentle breeze.

The presence of Moses and Elijah on the mount of Transfiguration is an assurance that their friend and mentor Jesus, is indeed the awaited Messiah. No wonder then that they are overwhelmed with awe and try to capture the moment by providing tents (tabernacles) for these illustrious friends of God.

The disciples are swiftly reminded however, that life in this world is never a destination but always a journey. And as Paul tells Timothy in our second reading: the journey is not invariably upbeat and we do well to anticipate struggles, anguish; misunderstandings and grief. The precise nature and timing of life’s changes and challenges, its twists and turns are as unavoidable as they are unforeseen.

And here perhaps we can draw some inspiration from Abraham and Sarah; who set out in faith on a journey not as a whim but in direct obedience to God’s calling. Faith is not about knowing all that is and all that lies ahead. To live with faith is to take each step trusting that we are loved.

Knowing we are loved is our blessed assurance in times of change; loss or challenge. And while change and loss are always painful they also open us to a new future; a future that echoes the promise that inspired Abraham and Sarah to set out on their journey.

Herman Hesse puts it well in a piece he wrote called *Stages*:

As every flower fades and every youth

advances into old age, so each stage of life blooms,

Each shining wisdom and each virtue in its time.

But it cannot last forever.

The heart must in every stage

Be prepared for a parting and a new beginning

With bravery and no grief.

It must surrender to new beginnings and know

That in every beginning lives a magician

Who protects and gives life a helping hand.

We should wander cheerfully through room after room

Hanging around nowhere as if it is our home.

The Holy spirit, seeking to widen us, not hold us in a corner,

Wants us to have room to move from stage to stage.

Hardly are we at home with a way of living

And cosily settled in, then drowsiness threatens

And we are ready to leave,

Feeling like we are held by some paralyzing trap.

Perhaps it will still be so at death's door too, and

We will be launched again as a youth into new rooms,

The call of life never ending...

Where to then, Heart?

Take your leave and fare thee well!

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