

Pastoral Reflection
2nd Sunday of Lent
March 13, 2022

Our readings during this Second Sunday of Lent are filled with unusual images – of animals being split in two for sacrifices, of darkness hovering over Abram and bringing on a trance-like state, of Jesus's face and clothing spontaneously changing before the eyes of his disciples and of a cloud coming down to earth with a great Voice speaking from it. In the midst of these strange images, we are being given the message that when we covenant with the Lord, when we “wait for the Lord with courage,” as we are instructed in the Psalm, when we “listen to Him,” as instructed in the Gospel – we are invited to join in His glory. This is our Lenten path.

We are journeying together toward Lent during a time when unusual images and experiences surround us. Although we may be taking refuge in the current time of respite that we're having from the Covid pandemic, we hold close in our hearts the possibility for further surges and the images of those we know who have been so deeply affected by the impact of Covid over these last two years – and we bear witness to the strangeness of living through this time in human history. We may be accustomed to the practices that have kept us safe, but how unusual it has been that our images of each other have been altered by our need to wear masks and that our distance from each other has been a necessary safety measure. The image of animals being sacrificed may seem harsh, yet these sacrifices that we have and continue to endure render harsh impact as well.

The images and stories from the war in Ukraine are also heartbreaking to bear witness to, as we are aware that innocent men, women and children are being turned into victims and we live in fear of the potential of world war and the threat of nuclear attack. In our local church, we are embarking upon a call to change that will undoubtedly create new images and experiences of what it means to be Catholic in St. Louis – and it forces us to look at our current circumstances and understandings and ready ourselves for newness and change.

As we continue our journey in Lent, toward Easter, we are reminded to “wait for the Lord with courage.” We can be tempted to think that this waiting is passive, simply waiting for the Lord to arrive and our worries and harsh images to fade. Waiting with courage is active, being courageous takes effort and energy. We are invited this Lenten season to listen to and wait on the Lord with courage. What will that mean in your life as you contemplate living in this unusual time, ripe with opportunities to take courage in prayer and in action? Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here.” Our challenge and call this Lent, and always, is to find courage in the midst of our experiences – strange as they might be – and to seek and discover the goodness they bring as we reach toward union with our Lord.

Teresa Sullivan