

Let's put ourselves in the place of Peter, John and James. I'm going to give you some time to do that in this first part. I'll pause for a little bit every now and then to allow you to imagine the experience. It might help to close your eyes...

You are with Peter, John and James. It's about a week after Jesus told the group of his upcoming passion and death in Jerusalem. You've seen Jesus go off to pray before, in deserted places, on top of mountains but, this time, he's invited you to come along. How does it make you feel? (Pause) What do you expect to happen? (Pause)

Not much seems to be happening at first. Jesus goes off by himself leaving you and the others to be by yourselves. You all remain silent, watching, while your leader, and friend, enters into deep prayer. How do you imagine Jesus praying? (Pause)

Things are so silent, so holy, you enter into prayer yourself, just as you saw Jesus praying. Pray for a moment with Jesus. (Pause) You pray for a while, but you're also pretty tired from climbing that mountain and all the events leading up to it and, as can often happen at times like that, you fall asleep. (Pause)

Something awakens you! You look up and see Jesus, still where he was before, but he's radiant! Not just happy, he's actually giving off light! It's like the glorious light from beyond! Two men are with him, also appearing in glory. From the conversation, you can tell who they are: Moses

and Elijah. Everything you've known as holy from the time you were growing up is represented in these two men: the Law of Moses, the challenge of the prophets! And they're talking with Jesus about the "exodus he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem." Think of what that means to YOU. (Pause)

Peter is excited! He wants to keep the experience going, "Tents for everyone!," but you know spiritual experiences cannot be captured and kept forever fresh. Besides . . . it's getting dark . . . in the middle of the day! A cloud has come, overshadowing you, and the cloud is growing, coming closer! It envelopes all of you! You enter into that cloud and its darkness and its uncertainty and all the fear those things engender in your heart. Spend a moment in your cloud. (Pause)

Then . . . a voice . . . "This is my chosen Son; listen to him." Think about what that means to you. (Pause)

The cloud dissipates. Moses and Elijah are gone. Only Jesus remains. Only Jesus is to be listened to and what he has said is to take up one's cross and follow him. Following him to the cross is to follow him to glory! (Pause)

You can open your eyes now if you closed them. "Following Jesus to the Cross is to follow him to glory! As St. Paul told us in the second reading: Jesus "will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body." The glory of the Transfiguration, which is a foreshadowing of the Resurrection, is something he intends to share with all who are baptized into his death and

resurrection.

When we speak of our crosses to bear we most often speak in terms of bad things that happen to us – diseases we contract or get born with, people or situations in our lives that annoy us. There's nothing wrong with striving to bear such crosses lovingly in solidarity with the suffering of Christ, but that's not the only kind of dying we need to do. There are also things we choose for ourselves to which we need to die.

[Some of our RCIA Candidates are here. They have been baptized into various religions, that freed them from their sins, made them into members of Christ's body, but, like the rest of us, they have failed to live the life of Christ completely. They, like the rest of us, have chosen sin over God. They, hopefully like the rest of us, come before God in penitence for the sins they have chosen.]

The sins we choose keep us from living the best life we could, from being as Christ-like as we are able, of becoming the people we were meant to be. But there's a part of us that likes those sinful things! They seem good to us, comfortable, friendly, pleasurable, whatever; even though we KNOW they are not good for us, that they make us less than what we could be. Our attraction to them needs to die. Just as these sins are things we choose for ourselves, this is a cross we need to choose for ourselves.

This season of Lent calls us to reflect on our lives, consider the ways in which we are not who we could be and who we should be, that calls us to turn away from sin and believe

in the Gospel! For such is the path to the glory of the Resurrection!