

## Reflection

Feb. 24, 2020

As I prepared for this reflection, two things came to mind – the first was the Gospel and the second was the beginning of Lent.

Today, our Gospel passage follows a pattern familiar to Mark. Beginning with an experience, the Transfiguration, followed by a revelation, “You are my Son,” then a confrontation with an unclean Spirit. As Jesus descended the mountain with Peter, James and John, they approach the other disciples who were trying to explain why they couldn’t cast out the demon in the little child. The Scribes gloried in their failure, sneering, asking sarcastic questions, discrediting them and with them, Jesus.

When Jesus appeared, the crowd, seemingly awestruck, ran to him. Jesus asked what they were discussing. The father of the child spoke: “My little one is possessed by a mute spirit, which throws it into convulsions, falling, foaming at the mouth. Sometimes it is so violent, he is pulled to pieces. Often, it throws him into the fire or water to kill him. When the spirit leaves the child, it is so weak that he appears like a corpse. I asked your disciples to expel the spirit, but they were unable to do it.”

Harshly, Jesus says to the crowd, “What an unbelieving lot you are! How long can I endure you?” His rebuke was both for the crowd and for the disciples. The first because of their lack of faith and the disciples because their faith was so weak they were unable to use the power Jesus had given them.

We feel two emotions in Jesus today; impatience and disappointment. Feelings that we often experience in our struggles to follow his footsteps. Even the child’s father seems to question the power of Jesus. At Jesus’s request, the small one is brought to him. To the father’s “if you can,” Jesus responds, “Everything is possible to those who believe.” The father cries, “I do believe, but help the little faith I have.” The evil spirit shook and convulsed the boy and with a terrible shriek came out. Later the disciples ask Jesus, why they failed to cast out the devil. He replied this kind can only come out through prayer and fasting.

As we stand on the threshold of Lent – perhaps this is our invitation – to deepen our faith as we live in our troubled world. L. R. Knost offers:

“Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world.  
All things break. And all things can be mended.  
Not with time, as they say, but with intention.  
So, go. Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally.  
The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you”

Maya Angelou states “LOVE knows no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination – Full of HOPE.”

-Judith Bonini, IHM