

**Second Sunday of Lent, March 8, 2020**

**Have you ever had one of those moments that you want to just freeze in time? It's such a wonderful moment that you don't want to leave it? Like when you've fallen in love and you and your beloved realize for the first time what is happening. Or when you see that newborn baby for the first time – especially if it's your own. Or maybe that time you marched down the aisle – either for a graduation or for matrimony – moments that you want to preserve forever - like, “it doesn't get any better than this.”**

**The 3 disciples seem to experience this on the mountaintop and Peter says, “*Lord, it is good that we are here – if you wish, I will make 3 tents her*” – referring to the Jewish Feast of Booths or Tabernacles, when, for 8 days in thanksgiving of a great harvest the people would dwell in ritual tents in celebration. Let's just freeze the moment – put up some tents and celebrate here on this mountaintop!**

**But as we all know, those moments cannot be frozen, cannot last forever. Something has to move us forward. For Peter and James and John it was none other than the voice of God coming from a cloud – in the Hebrew Scriptures a sign of the presence of God – and proclaiming “*This is my beloved Son*” - the same words spoken at his baptism. But then they hear 3 words that can sum up our entire duty as Christians: “*Listen to him.*” Listen to him. And suddenly the disciples are on their knees, on the ground. What happened to the tent idea? What about freezing the moment? Peter's plans changed to make room for Jesus' plans. And the touch of Jesus Christ gives them, give us, the strength to get up off of our knees and listen to him. “*Rise, and do not be afraid.*”**

**Some Scripture scholars tell us that this story of the transfiguration foreshadows another mountaintop experience with these same 3 apostles on another mountain – this time the Mount of Olives, when it is *Jesus* who kneels in distress and prays: “*My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as you will.*” - a part of the story we will hear toward the end of Lent. In that story Jesus experiences another transformation as he surrenders fully to the will of God and stands up to meet his accusers in his ultimate journey to Jerusalem. And by facing the fear, going through the pain, and embracing the cross, Jesus conquers death.**

**I think those times in our lives that we want to freeze sustain us through those times of fear and pain and anguish. Remembering the newborn when teenage daughter gets hooked on meth or re-living the wedding aisle when there are bitter words exchanged between spouses or when your friend and teacher is dying on a cross, holding on to an experience beyond words on a mountaintop – saving moments that remind us that the worst of times are not the only times.**

**In Lent we are called upon to face the worst in ourselves, clinging to the truth that in baptism we acknowledge that we are children of God: sometimes scared, sometimes confused, but always, when we raise our eyes, touched by Jesus – with whom and through whom we can face anything with love.**

**This is my beloved Son. Listen to him!**