

If we think back to last Sunday's Gospel, we entered the desert with Christ. Each year we hear the account of His temptation. The Spirit leads Him into the wilderness. He fasts. He is tempted. He refuses bread, power, and spectacle. He chooses obedience.

The desert strips everything down. Lent begins there because discipleship begins there. Before glory, there is testing.

Then, on this Second Sunday, everything changes. Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a high mountain and He is transfigured before them. His face shines like the sun. His garments become dazzling white. The Father's voice declares: "This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him."

The Church gives us these two Sundays back-to-back on purpose.

The First Sunday shows us what we must face.

The Second Sunday shows us why.

The Transfiguration comes right after Jesus predicts His Passion. The disciples are shaken. A suffering Messiah makes no sense to them. So Jesus gives them a glimpse of His hidden glory. Not to remove the cross, but to prepare them for it.

This is the pattern of the Christian life.

In the desert, Jesus refuses to grasp at comfort or control. On the mountain, the Father reveals who He truly is. The glory was always there; it was simply veiled.

And that is true for us.

Lent is not about religious self-improvement. It is about transformation. The word “transfigured” means changed in form: a glimpse of what is to come. What happened visibly in Christ is meant to happen invisibly in us.

But notice Peter’s reaction: “Lord, it is good that we are here. Let us build three tents.” He wants to stay in the moment of consolation. We understand that impulse. When prayer feels powerful, when life feels clear, when faith feels easy, we want to freeze it.

But we cannot live on the mountain.

After the vision, Jesus leads them back down toward Jerusalem, toward suffering, toward the cross.

That is why these Sundays are paired. If we see only the desert, we become discouraged. If we seek only the mountain, we become sentimental. The Christian life holds both.

Your desert this Lent may be resisting a habitual sin, fasting from comforts, making time for prayer when you feel nothing, going to confession after years away, or forgiving someone who hurt you. It feels dry. Hidden. Unnoticed.

But the mountain tells you this: the struggle is leading somewhere. Obedience leads to glory. The cross leads to resurrection.

And at the center of it all is the Father's command: "Listen to Him."

Listen to Him in the desert when He says no to temptation.

Listen to Him on the mountain when His glory is revealed.

Listen to Him when He speaks of the cross.

If we follow Him through the desert of Lent — not running from it, not numbing it, not trying to escape it — then we will also share in His light.

Today we are given a glimpse of the end of the story so that we do not lose heart in the middle of it.

It is good that we are here.

But we must follow Him down the mountain and walk with Him toward Easter.