

## SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Gospel: Saint Matthew 17: 1-9

### On Spiritual Consolation

#### 18.1 First Point

When temptations and interior trials have been endured patiently, God ordinarily encourages a pure soul with spiritual consolation. The way God gives us this and the way we should respond when we experience it is brought home to us in today's Gospel, which tells about Our Lord's transfiguration. This is a symbol of the spiritual consolation which God sometimes gives to souls who lead a truly interior life.

The Gospel tells us that Our Lord was transfigured while praying on a very high, lonely mountain.<sup>122</sup> This teaches us that God pours out his consolation on souls who devote themselves a great deal to prayer and who love this holy exercise.

Those souls who are half-hearted and lazy, who have little love for prayer, should not be surprised if they are not among those whom God favors in a special way, with whom he communicates himself familiarly. They do not enjoy an intimate union with him, because they do not give themselves to the exercise that unites us with God, in which we learn to enjoy God and to have even on this earth a foretaste of the joy of heaven.

Be faithful to this holy exercise so that all your actions may be done in the spirit of prayer.

#### 18.2 Second Point

God is pleased to unite himself intimately with pure souls who have no attachment to sin. Still, he does not wish them to become too strongly attached to his gifts, for this attachment in a soul is a defect that displeases him, because it shows that the soul is not seeking God himself, but the gift of God and its own satisfaction.

This is why, when God makes use of consolation to strengthen souls and to give them a chance to rest a little after undergoing trials and tribulations, they should accept this little refreshment with a simple view of God's good pleasure, without being complacent about the personal enjoyment they find there.

The three apostles who accompanied Jesus Christ on Mt. Tabor lacked this balance. Unfamiliar with God's ways, they were more eager to prolong the delight they were enjoying in this mystery than to contemplate God's greatness and goodness, which on this occasion should have filled their minds and absorbed all their attention. As a result the exterior glory of Jesus Christ vanished in a moment and disappeared from their sight.<sup>123</sup>

That is God's way. He deprives us of the sensible pleasure found in consolation when we are too attached to it and enjoy it with too much self-satisfaction.

### 18.3 Third Point

Jesus' transfiguration lasted only a short time. This shows us that the consolations which God sometimes allows in this life are only a respite he sends to holy souls in the midst of their interior desolation, to help them endure these trials with more courage, and to augment their affection, which sometimes slackens off because of the weakness of nature.

Hardly had Jesus Christ enjoyed a moment of consolation in his transfiguration when he found himself once more alone,<sup>124</sup> deprived of everything, and with no thought of anything other than of the torments he would have to undergo in Jerusalem,<sup>125</sup> of which he had conversed with Moses and Elias, and which had been the subject of his conversation with his disciples as they came down from the mountain.<sup>126</sup>

We can understand from this that passing consolations should help us stir up our courage and confirm us in the love of suffering and the love of interior and exterior trials, from which we must not expect to be exempt in this life.

122 Mt 17:1-2

123 Mt 17:4-8

124 Lk 9:36

125 Lk 9:31

126 Mt 17:9-12