
PRAY WITH ME

God of love,
you love each of us at every moment of our lives,
Give us confidence in that love,
and help us to love as you do.
As we listen to the needs around us
with our physical ears,
open the ears of our hearts to receive and respond
to those who come to us in their time of need.
In your all-loving name, we pray.

AMEN.



SECOND WEEK OF LENT



**“This is my beloved Son,
with whom I am well pleased;
listen to him.”**

MATTHEW 3:17



We all have “mountaintop” experiences in the course of our lives.

These are luminous moments when we feel rich connections with life and our place within it. This may have been an experience of nature — a walk alongside a mountain ridge with a crystalline view in all directions. Or perhaps it was a moment of deep intimacy with a spouse or other friend. Such glimpses from the mountaintop help us listen as deeply as we can for who we are and whose we are, children of the same loving God — all of us together and without exception.

This week of our Lenten retreat offers the story of a similar mountaintop experience. On the mountain of Transfiguration, Jesus’ disciples had a vision of him in his truth — resplendent Messiah and Lord. They wanted to remain there, with no room for darkness, doubt or despair, but Jesus takes them down the mountain. Ahead lies betrayal, torture and brutal execution.

Invited by the voice of the Father to listen to his Son, the disciples listened, but still they got it wrong. They ran when Jesus was arrested. Then three times Peter denied even knowing him. But they continued to listen through the experience of the crucifixion and into the time of resurrection. The vision they glimpsed on the mountaintop came true and they listened now with their whole selves. Forgiven and transformed, many of them went on to give their lives out of love for the Lord. The world would never be the same.

Our Lenten journey calls us to treasure the mountaintop moments we experience as gifts of our loving God meant to help sustain us on the road ahead. Rather than try to remain there, to pitch our tents and settle in, we let these visionary experiences draw us back down the mountain to our lives and those with whom we are called to share them. The vision is given to help nourish us for our life’s mission, both in our personal relationships and in our ministry within Catholic health care.

Along the way we grow hearts of flesh, that by God’s grace, learn to listen and feel and respond with God’s compassion.

Think of the sleep-deprived patient who acts out aggressively, the homeless person who rightly mistrusts us as part of a health care establishment that has failed her time and again. Consider those in our community who suffer the injustice of health care disparities — that should bring us to our knees. If we listen as God listens, our hearts will be broken and mended, again and again. And out of that brokenness will flow a love that changes our lives and the lives of those we serve.

FOR REFLECTION

“The first service that one owes to others ... consists of listening to them. Just as love of God begins with listening to God’s word, so the beginning of love for the brothers and sisters is learning to listen to them. It is God’s love for us that God not only gives us God’s word but also lends us God’s ear.”

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

- ◇ What mountaintop experience continues to sustain your life and work? How?
- ◇ What simple discipline can help you listen more deeply to others at home and work?
- ◇ Is there a justice issue in your community you feel called to try to change?