

THE 2ND SUNDAY OF LENT

February 28, 2010

(Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18; Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 9:28-36)

As citizens of heaven, climb your mountain of prayer

The Philippians abandoned the high moral standard - the heavenly way, set for them by Paul, and started following the worldly standard of success which can be summarized in four words: **fortune, fame, power** and **pleasure**. Paul describes those who live by such world's standards as "**enemies of the cross of Christ ... whose minds are set on earthly things, whose god is their stomach, whose glory is in their shame; and, whose end is destruction**" (verses 18-19).

For this reason, Paul reminds these Philippians that although they are in the world, that their citizenship is in heaven, and should therefore, try to conduct themselves accordingly. Paul's advice to the Philippians is needed more in our own society of today. We need to be reminded also that we, as Christians, are "**citizens of heaven**" and consequently subject to God's laws and precepts. We should be very careful of the way we go about worldly things or else we may be seen as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Brothers and sisters, we know that it is not easy to be in today's world and yet live fully as if we are already in heaven. We have many fears, doubts and obstacles on our way. Yes, even the disciples of Jesus encountered such barriers.

Just before today's Gospel passage of the Transfiguration, Jesus announced to his disciples of his Passion, Death and Resurrection (Luke 9:22). Being human like us, many of them began to express some fears and doubts about his Messiah-ship. Some wanted to back off before it is too late? It was at this point that Jesus took them up to the mountain of prayer where they encountered God.

God opened their spiritual eyes, and they caught a glimpse of the true reality of Jesus that their physical eyes never saw. They were assured that the whole heavenly court, including the Father, was on the side of Jesus and that final victory will definitely be his. They were strengthened.

Brothers and sisters, how often do we experience the absurdities of life such that our minds are filled with doubts and fears like the disciples? At times we face some personal and family crisis such as terminal illness, breakdown of relationship between husband and wife, between parent and child, between friends. Don't we sometimes feel like the whole world is collapsing on our heads?

In such times like these, giving up the faith is never the right option. We rather need to go up the mountain of prayer and experience transfiguration; to encounter God – the source of strength and victory. This will give us the courage to take up our daily crosses and follow Jesus, knowing that the **cross** of Lent is followed by the **crown** of Easter.

GOD IS GOOD! ALL THE TIME!