

Second Week of Lent

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION

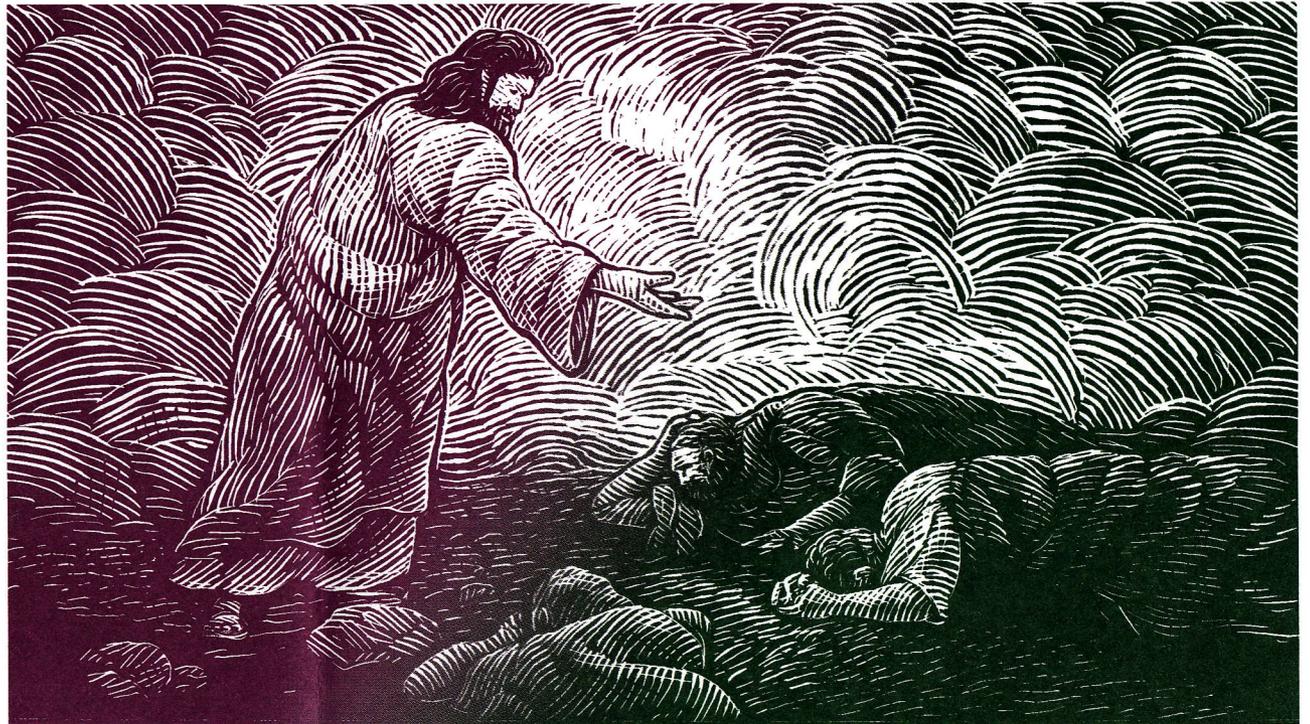
God our Father,
you generously share your Son with us.
Open our eyes to the wonder of this gift.

When Jesus was transfigured before his friends,
they fell to the ground in astonishment.
They were changed forever.

Let us be startled out of our usual ways
of seeing
so that we can recognize your will
and the work you want us to do.

Let us be opened and transformed
because we, too, have been given the faith
to see him.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.



FEBRUARY 17, 2008
OPEN OUR EYES

In today's Gospel, Matthew 17:1–9, Peter, James, and John see Jesus transfigured before their eyes. Witnessing Jesus in this way and hearing God's voice tell them that Jesus is the Son of God must have been terrifying. Because we have been taught that Jesus is God, it is hard for us to appreciate what these men experienced—how it must have changed them. They saw Jesus with new eyes. In Matthew 16:21–23, just before the Transfiguration, Jesus had begun to teach the disciples about the Passion to come—and they found it hard to accept. Now, coming down from the mountain, he tells them not to share the vision until after he has been raised from the dead. How their minds must have

been whirling, trying to put everything together! In the Transfiguration vision, they had a glimpse of God's Son fulfilling a larger plan, far beyond anything they could have understood.

We are still trying to understand. Imagine that you are with these men and Jesus on the mountain. Read this story to yourself. Experience their shock, their excitement, their confusion, and the great wonder that God really sent his Son to be with us. Carry those feelings with you this week. Be a witness to others of this miracle by the way you live, the way you see and treat people. Seeing the Lord changes people. Let it change you.

This Week at Home

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18 BE A FRIEND

In today's Gospel, Luke 6:36–38, Jesus teaches that we are to be merciful as our Father in heaven is merciful. A good synonym for the word *merciful* is *compassionate*. Being compassionate means to suffer with someone or to have empathy toward him or her. This may involve easing a person's pain—physical pain, disappointment, or hurt of any kind. Or we may serve best by offering the time to just listen and be present. Talk in your family about times when someone has been compassionate to you. Help each other name opportunities to do as Jesus asks, to be merciful or compassionate.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19 LENTEN PRETZELS

Pretzels seem to have developed in the early days of the Church when milk, fat, and eggs were forbidden during Lent. Made from flour, water, and salt, and shaped like arms crossed in prayer, pretzels were appropriate Lenten food—and still are. They touch on two of our Lenten customs, fasting and prayer. *God of our ancestors, through the centuries you have helped us carry out our Lenten practices. Help us to fast from those things that get in the way of our relationship with you. Help us to pray with our heart, soul, and mind. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20 A SERVANT

In today's Gospel, Matthew 20:17–28, Jesus is teaching the disciples about greatness as they walk toward Jerusalem. They are startled to hear that the greatest person is the one who serves others. Isn't servanthood the opposite

of greatness? Jesus shows us that *choosing* the role of servant is indeed a sign of greatness. What people in history or characters in books, films, or television have put themselves at the service of others and have been considered great? *Father in heaven, this is a hard lesson. Show us how we can be of service to others. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21 SAINT PETER DAMIAN

Both as prior of a monastery and as a cardinal bishop, Peter Damian was a peacemaker. During his era (the eleventh century), he worked to settle the furious disputes common within the Church. Traveling widely to bring factions together, he also tried to reform priests and religious who had become too materialistic. Scripture and prayer were the center of his life. He often returned to his monastery in

Ravenna, where he died. Peacemaking, reading scripture, praying. Focus on one of these today.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22 CHAIR OF SAINT PETER

Today we celebrate the Chair of Saint Peter, a chair from early Christian times, venerated because it is believed to have been associated with Saint Peter when he presided over the liturgical assembly. The chair is a symbol of Saint Peter as a teacher, and also a symbol of the teaching authority of our Holy Father. It takes many teachers to bring each one of us to maturity. Some teachers are in classrooms, some are family members, some are friends or coworkers. Today tell one or more of your teachers how much you appreciate what they have given you and thank God for their work.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23 STAND UP FOR SOMEONE

Today we honor Saint Polycarp, an early Christian bishop and martyr and a disciple of the apostle John. Polycarp was one of the most important leaders of the Christian community in Asia. He argued against heresies, taught, and encouraged the faithful in the midst of persecutions. As a very old man, he was martyred for his faith. Think about what you are willing to stand up for and if you would die rather than renounce your faith.