

2nd Sunday of Lent, Cycle A, March 12, 2017

Sometimes when we're driving down the highway, we might turn off the main road and take a detour. Maybe workers are blocking the road because they are repaving it. We don't have much choice then, but to take the detour.

Or, maybe that's not the situation. Maybe we decide to get off the main road for our own reasons. Perhaps we want to stop and grab a bite to eat. Perhaps need to fill up the tank with gas. That's why we take the detour.

The apostles were used to travelling around with Jesus as he went from town to town. They entered the synagogues with him, to hear him preach to the crowds. They accompanied him as he walked among the sick, as he healed them. The apostles were used to travelling with Jesus.

But today, Jesus takes three of his apostles: Peter, James and John, on a detour, off the road that they had been travelling. He takes them up the mountain, in order to glimpse a brief moment of glory, in order to hear a voice from heaven.

It is wonderful. But it only lasts a few minutes. Then, they climb down the mountain. They go back to the "real world," so to speak. Jesus goes back to travelling from town to town, to healing the sick and speaking words of hope.

Jesus continues on the journey which eventually will bring him to Calvary. He continues on the journey which eventually will turn into the way of the cross.

It is not an easy road to travel. It is a rough road, not paved, easy to stumble on. All that walking tires out the apostles. It makes their legs sore, puts callouses on their feet and wears out their sandals. This journey makes a lot of physical demands on the apostles.

It makes a lot of spiritual demands on them as well. Some of the towns which they visit do not welcome them with outstretched arms. Many of the people are eager to have Jesus work miracles, but only listen to his teachings with indifference. Some of them even reject Jesus openly and encourage him to move on to another village.

It is not an easy road for the apostles to travel. Jesus realizes this. That is why he has them take this detour. That is why he has them climb up the mountain. That brief moment of glory will lift up their spirits. It will revive them and give them the energy to take another step, until they reach their final goal, glory which will last, not for a brief moment only, but for all eternity. That is why they go up the mountain. That is why they take this detour off the usual road.

The Lord knows that it is not always easy to travel the road which stretches out in front of us. Life can be hard. It makes physical and spiritual demands on us. That is especially true when we attempt to follow Christ, when, as his apostles, we join with him in his mission of sharing the good news with others, of bringing healing to the earth.

During this season of Lent, Jesus is inviting us also to take a detour off our usual road. He is inviting us to leave our everyday activities for a moment. He wants us to climb the mountain of prayer, to see his glory, even if only for a split second, to hear his voice more clearly. He wants to revive us and lift up our spirits. That is what can happen during this season of Lent. That is what can happen, if we take that detour.

Our candidates for full communion, Morgan Bell, Nancy Worth and Amanda Caballero, have decided to join us in our journey of faith in the Catholic Church. They are preparing to celebrate the sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. To do that, they are sharing with us in the discipline of Lent, with a greater emphasis upon prayer, reflection upon God's word, and works of charity. They now ask for our prayers and support.