



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER  
ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH  
CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

March 12, 2017

MORE OF  
HIM  
L E S S O F M E

**Introduction to the Word:**

Lent is an intentional time, a special invitational time, a mini retreat time if you like. A time to slow down, pause and reflect; to examine, reframe, and deepen our relationship with God, others and self. This Lent we will be focussing on the theme “More of Him and Less of Me.” It is a time to take the focus off of ourselves – “what we are doing for Lent” and instead to connect with “what God wishes to do within us for Lent.” I pray that this Lent will be a time of blessing for you and all in your small group.

In addition to this written guide, and our audio of the Sunday Message, we have also developed a series of video follow ups. We encourage you to use these are the commentaries during the Season of Lent – and they will form the small group questions which will guide you.

**Warm Up Activity:**

- Can you identify a ‘Transfiguration’ moment in your own life, that was pivotal in your life with Christ?
- Can you imagine the experience of Peter, James, and John, and how it affected the way they looked at Jesus, and listened to Him, and accompanied Him after that moment?
- What parallels do you see between your ‘Transfiguration’ moment, and that of the three disciples?

**CALL TO PRAYER (5 MINUTES)**

**Leader: Be merciful to us, O Lord, for we have sinned, and open us to your Word.**

**Lord Jesus,** you value us as your prized creation,

**Lord, have mercy.**

**Christ Jesus,** fully present to us in our hearing of your Word,

**Christ, have mercy.**

**Lord Jesus,** you come to us to bring us to where you are,

**Lord, have mercy.**

**Let us pray together our Heart to Home Prayer:**

*God Our Heavenly Father, we long to make our thoughts your thoughts,*



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*and our ways your ways. As we prepare with attentive mind and open heart  
to hear your Word Lord, we long to be empowered with your Spirit  
so that we may bring your Word to our families, our parish and our communities.  
This, our prayer, we make through the intercession of Our Lady of the Visitation and in name of  
Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

### **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME** (45 minutes)

(Please select one person –not including the leader – to take a turn at reading the scripture passages below.)

#### **First Reading** (Genesis 12:1-4a)

The Lord said to Abram: "Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you." Abram went as the Lord directed him.      The Word of the Lord.      **Thanks be to God.**

#### **Second Reading** (Second Letter of Saint Paul to Timothy 1:8b-10)

Beloved: Bear your share of hardships for the gospel with the strength that comes from God. He saved us to his own design and the grace bestowed and called us to a holy life, not according to our works but according to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began, but now made manifest through the appearance of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.  
The Word of the Lord.      **Thanks be to God.**

#### **Gospel** (Matthew 17:1-9)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.      **Glory to you, O Lord.**  
Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah". While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate, and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid." And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus charged them, "Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."  
The Gospel of the Lord.      **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

*(Allow a few minutes for quiet and for a brief reflection on a meaningful word or thought)*



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**COMMENTARY:**

[You may also as a group wish to listen again to the Audio of the Lord's Day Message](#)

[Please watch now the Video Commentary for this Week](#)

Our First Reading presents us with Abram, still young in his life with God. God overwhelms Abram with His promises and blessings. These words must have surprised Abram, as God was asking him to leave behind the known and familiar and journey forth to where He would send him. Abram had no idea how God would work in and through him, and bring about these promises of a “great nation”, and that “all the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you”. How could this happen? He was a simple shepherd. His future seemed so limited, as he and his wife, Sarah, had no children, which was looked upon as a curse in their culture. Yet, despite any hesitancy, Abram walked in faith and did as God directed. God was with him, and God would be faithful in His promises and blessings.

Now, picture the words of St. Paul to Timothy! St. Paul experienced abundantly in his own life. His ministry was bearing witness to that new life of the Risen Lord, but one that came with suffering, but in the end also with much blessing. As God is holy, we have been called to a holy life. We are holy in Christ Jesus. St. Paul talks about God’s “own design and the grace bestowed”. God is at work, and we have what we need to respond to His grace and to share in His life, and to share that life with others.

Then the beauty of .this gospel! We can only imagine that moment of the Transfiguration, and how this completely transformed their understanding and belief in who Jesus was. Lucky Peter, James and John! The other disciples had to wait for such a manifestation of His glory in the resurrection. The presence of Moses and Elijah are significant—Moses representing the Law of Judaism, and Elijah representing the Prophetic Tradition of Judaism. The company of Jesus with them proclaims that His revelation is in harmony with the Law and the Prophets. Jesus told us that He came to fulfill the Law, not to abolish it. Peter’s words about putting up the three tents reflect the solemnity of this manifestation in terms of their religious tradition.

Once again, Jesus focused on His purpose – not just His actions. He knew that the Cross was needed to fulfill the Father’s will for His life and for humanity. The Cross was His purpose and the Cross is our focus too – it is part of our life and if we are to embrace Christ in our life then we must also embrace the Cross in our life.

So here again – More of Him and Less of Me. We see the invitation to GO, JOIN, SEE. Abram told to go, leave behind all that was comfortable. Timothy to “join with me”, and the Apostles to “see the transfigured Christ.” These are the opposites of the Tempter (Satan from last week’s



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Gospel) and his attempts to take Christ off course. These temptations are ours too – to be taken off course in our attempt to make it a Lent - More of Him and Less of Me. It is only by making daily GOING with the Lord, JOINING in the Lord and SEEING clearly the Lord in our lives that we can truly continue to permit the Season to be about Him.

*(Allow about 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to react to the **Commentary** to identify a newly discovered insight or idea.)*

### **Questions for Reflection and Discussion:** (15-20 minutes)

God presents us with this challenge, after all we have seen, and heard, and experienced, to recognize, follow, and proclaim Jesus to be the Son of God, the Saviour.

- (a) Have we had a ‘Transfiguration’ moment/experience? If so, how has it changed us?
- (b) How are we conscious of “listening” to Jesus?
- (c) Are we willing to let Jesus touch us, as He did the three disciples, and help us to “not be afraid”?
- (d) Use now the other questions mentioned in the video as part of your discussion.

### Intercessions:

**Leader:** Our response: Lord Hear us

For our Holy Father Pope Francis, for health and ministry. For our Church as we continue to walk humbly with the Lord guided by the Holy Spirit. We pray to the Lord.

For our parish community as we enter the Season of Lent, that we may dedicate this Season to More of Him and Less of Me as we use this Season to live out the spirit of surrender, invite others to worship at Mass and share in the reverence and love we have for the Eucharist. We pray to the Lord.

For all those who are preparing to celebrate Sacraments during this coming year; for those preparing for marriage, those in our RCIA process, those children who are preparing for First Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation: may their journey of faith lead them closer to the source of Hope and Life who is Jesus. We pray to the Lord.

For those areas of our life that are in need of being restored to Hope. May the weight of doubt not tempt us, faith not fail us, but rather may our relationship with Jesus abound in great measure as we adopt the mindset of Christ. We pray to the Lord.



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For those who are sick and suffering at this time, especially parishioners in hospital or nursing homes. For those who have died and for all the intentions recorded in the Parish Book of Prayer. We pray to the Lord.

Leader: **Let us seek the intercession of the Patroness of our Parish as we pray: [Hail Mary](#)**

### **Closing Activity and Prayer** (15-20 minutes)

*(This time is reserved for quiet prayer as well as for an action-response to the communal reflections. You may wish to create and add petitions of prayer at this time. This time also intent to provide moments to connect and “outreach” to the larger community.)*

#### **GROUP PRAYER/ ACTION:**

During this week, try to be more conscious of the presence of God, and how He may manifest Himself to you. Look for those moments when Jesus is revealed to you, in His glory and in His suffering. Give glory and praise to God for these and (in hindsight) ask forgiveness for those opportunities lost to recognize, acknowledge and respond to Jesus during the day. (Lord where did I see you? Lord where did I miss you?)

#### **GROUP PRAYER COMMITMENT**

Please consider offering a **Holy Hour in our Adoration Chapel** – either as a group or individually –for the intentions of Pastor, our Pastoral Team, in their work to build up our parish.

What is your group plan for service, prayer, action during the upcoming Lenten Season.

Start preparing as an individual and a group for our Day of Mercy on April 6.

Consider individually and as a group attending the Pilgrimage to be part of our visit to St Michael’s Cathedral in Toronto and hearing Cardinal Collins speak.

#### **GROUP ACTION:**

- ✓ Is your small group helping with our commitment to aide St Patrick Parish, Hamilton and their downtown outreach? Remember any of these items can be placed in the Adoration Chapel Hallway – mark them “Hamilton.”
- ✓ What activities will you invite others (not in your group) to come and be a part of during Lent?

**Let us pray** (together)  
As we share in Your life, Lord God,  
we make thanksgiving to You  
for allowing us, while still on earth,



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to be partakers even now of the things of heaven.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

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