

**Thought for the Week**  
**8th March 2020**  
**Second Sunday in Lent (A)**

Lent is a precious time of preparation. Compared to the events described in today's readings our efforts may seem a little lacklustre: spending a bit more time in prayer, a bit less time on the internet, giving up chocolate or alcohol. It doesn't quite compare with witnessing the transfiguration of our Lord, or being promised a name so famous it will be used as a blessing.

But as St Paul reminds us it isn't really about us anyway. It's about God and the possibilities of his grace at work in us. And Lent is a wonderful time of opportunity to open ourselves to the workings of God's grace in our heart. All that is asked is that we try to be more attentive to the promptings of the Spirit, more open to the many opportunities that present every day to show that we appreciate the gifts of those around us, that we find more time to listen and be present to each other, and a little less indulgent of ourselves.

In his Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* Pope Francis talks a lot about the call to holiness. He points not to dramatic events but to the little things of everyday life as together providing the seedbed for our growth in holiness. He quotes Cardinal Nguyen van Thuan who spent a long time in jail in Vietnam. Rather than longing for the day he would be set free he decided to *"live the present moment, filling it to the brimming with love"*. By seizing *"the occasions that present themselves every day: I will accomplish ordinary actions in an extraordinary way"*.

Pope Francis sets out a vision of how we also can be transfigured by the grace of God working in us. And if we don't manage to live up to the expectations we have set ourselves for Lent we shouldn't be discouraged. Holiness says Pope Francis is, after all,

*"an encounter between our weakness and the power of God's grace"*.

A Parishioner