

2nd Sunday of Lent, YrC

February 28, 2010

QUEEN OF PEACE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA
Rev. Jeff McGowan

1st Reading: Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18

Abraham put his faith in the Lord, who credited it to him as an act of righteousness.

Psalm 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation.

2nd Reading: Philippians 3:17-4:1

Join with others in being imitators of me...in this way stand firm in the Lord.

Gospel: Luke 9:28b-36

Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep, but becoming fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him.

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Jesus of Nazareth had all the glory and the power as God's Son and with full knowledge of what would come upon him; he chose to be the servant of love rather than the king of glory. Why would he do that?

In the winter of 1952, during some of the heaviest combat in the Korean War, two United States Marine corporals were crouched in a bunker of a forward observation post some one hundred yards inside enemy lines. Jack Robison and Tim Casey had been friends for almost a year. They met in ammunition-demolition school in Quantico, Virginia, went on furlough together, then travelled on to Camp Pendleton, California, for advanced infantry training. Their regiment arrived in Pusan, South Korea, in the fall of 1951.

It was a little after midnight and a light snow was falling. Huddled in a bunker, the two were passing a cigarette back and forth when a hand grenade, lobbed by an undetected North Korean, landed squarely between them. Casey spotted it first. He nonchalantly flicked the butt aside and fell on the grenade. It detonated instantly, but Casey's stomach absorbed the explosion. He winked at Robison and rolled over dead.

Four years later Robison entered religious life. When he pronounced his solemn vows in 1960, he took a new name to symbolize his new life in Jesus Christ. He changed his given name from Jack to Casey in the hope that the spirit

of self-sacrifice that had animated Tim Casey's life would characterize his own. He also befriended Tim Casey's widowed mother and began to divide his Christmas vacations between his own family in Rhode Island and Mrs. Casey in Chicago.

One summer Father Casey Robison dropped in to visit Mrs. Casey. He was feeling tired and depressed. They spent the afternoon sitting and catching up on her friends who had become familiar to the priest through the years, holding hands all the while. After dinner they sat in the living room having a glass of wine, looking at photo albums and reminiscing about the days when Tim was alive. The priest's depression lingered. Unexpectedly, he asked, "Ma, do you think Casey really loved me?"

She laughed, "Oh, Jack, you sure have a way with you. You can't be serious." "I am serious," he said. There was confusion in her eyes. "Now stop teasing me, Jack." "I'm not teasing, Ma. Do you think Tim really loved me?"

She looked at him in disbelief. Then the confusion turned to fury. Mrs. Casey never cussed or took the Lord's name casually. But that night she stood up and screamed, "Good God, man, what more could he have done for you?"

Then she sank back in her chair, buried her head in her hands and began to sob. Over and over, as her shoulders shook, the same phrase was endlessly, unbearably repeated. "What more could he have done for you?" Finally she grew quiet. After what seemed a long time, she smiled slightly and said softly, "Ah, Jack, I guess we all need those reassurances from time to time."

So, that's why we need these gospels. Yes, Jesus of Nazareth was the all-powerful Son of God who could have forced his will on the world. Knowing we could never trust him if he had, he chose instead the way of love. Sometimes, especially when we are going through tough times, when we are tired, depressed, broken hearted, we need those reassurances. The words of Mrs. Casey ought to be enough for us as well, "Good God, what more could he have done for you?"