Second Sunday of Lent: March 1st, 2026.

THE RESTLESS HEART:

Restlessness as a Signal, Not a Failure (Matthew 17:1-9)

The Transfiguration Jesus Christ on the Mountain: (Matthew 17: 1-9. NIV)

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah. While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, ***"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"*** When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

On this second Sunday of Lent, the gospel of the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–9) meets us some sort of ache. Jesus takes Peter, James, and John, up the mountain. He is transfigured before them — radiant, glorious, unmistakably divine. Peter, overwhelmed, blurts out: "Lord, it is good that we are here. Let me build three tents…" Peter wants to secure the moment. Control it. Preserve it. Make it last. Isn't that what we do with our restlessness?

The Marathon Runner Who Couldn't Stop: A marathon runner crosses the finish line at the Olympics — exhausted and triumphant. Years of sacrifice culminate in that moment. And almost immediately she asks, "When is the next race?" Achievement didn't quiet the ache within. It just moved the finish line. So often we live this way:

§ **If I succeed more, I'll feel enough.**

§ **If I'm admired, I'll feel secure.**

§ **If I make more scores, I will be really successful.**

§ **If I fix myself, I'll finally be at peace.**

§ **But the heart keeps running.**

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Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead, by Brene Brown, (2015). Brené Brown has spent years studying shame, vulnerability, and belonging. She reminds us of something deeply spiritual:

Shame says, "I am not enough." Vulnerability says, "Here I am."

Brene believes that many of our restless pursuits are not about ambition - they are about shame. We run because we are afraid to stand still and be seen. We build "tents" — just like Peter — around:

Performance. Perfectionism. People-pleasing. Productivity.

Brene Brown calls perfectionism a 20-ton shield we carry, **thinking it will protect us from judgment**. But it exhausts us. And beneath that is the fear: If they really knew me, I wouldn't be loved. Isn't that the deeper restlessness?

The Mountain: Identity Before Achievement:

The transfiguration was a vision, a brief but powerful glimpse of the true glory of Christ. It is a special revelation of Jesus' divinity to Peter, James and John. It is also a foretaste of heaven.

St Simon Peter, the leading Apostle of Christ, the first Pope and Bishop of Rome, was known for his bold leadership, and transformation from fisherman to 'fisher of men'. Peter's profession was a fisherman from Bethsaida, not a tentmaker. The biblical figure known as a tentmaker was the Apostle Paul. However, his offering to build three shelters/tents during the transfiguration was a fleeting suggestion, not his profession.

Events before the transfiguration on the mountain:

A. Jesus feeds five thousand with five loaves

B. He walks on water

C. Jesus heals many sick people

D. Jesus feeds four thousand again

E. Then some religious leaders demand a miraculous sign from Jesus

F. Peter says Jesus is the Messiah .. like these are not enough

G. Jesus predicts his death for the first time …

Peter says, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah. Jesus says; Slow down Peter, you are my son, the beloved, listen to me, you are enough, Get up, do not be afraid, remain here with me …

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St Peter desires to build three tents, to prolong the joyful heavenly experience on the mountain top while himself, James and John remain there and soak all that in.

Jesus says; Get up, the mission ahead is vast and vital, there is ministry for you down the mountain, Now let's go! Do not be afraid. You are my beloved.

† Before Jesus performs another miracle.

† Before the Cross. Before the Resurrection.

† Christ is named God's Beloved.

Brene Brown's research shows that people who live with a strong sense of worthiness believe this simple truth: "I am worthy of love and belonging." That is exactly what the Father proclaims over Jesus. And through our **BAPTISM**, and the **Rite of election of catechumens** (last Tuesday at St Patrick's Co-Cathedral, Bishop Fleming spoke these over the ELECTS and the CANDIDATES) we are reminded who we are in God. Restlessness often flares up when we forget our identity and try to earn what has already been given.

Restlessness is not a failure, it is as a Signal

Instead of shaming ourselves for feeling unsettled, what if we saw restlessness as data?

Brown teaches that we cannot heal what we do not name. So instead of:

"What's wrong with me?", Try asking: "What is this longing telling me?"

"What fear is underneath my striving?" "Where do I feel not enough?"

Restlessness is not proof of failure.
It is information.
It is an invitation.

It may be God gently saying: "You are looking for belonging in places that cannot give it."

The Courage to Be Seen:

One of Brown's most powerful insights is this: vulnerability is the birthplace of connection. Peter wanted to build tents — to control the glory. But the disciples end up face down in fear. And what does Jesus do?

He touches them. He tells them, "Rise, and do not be afraid." That is vulnerability: Falling to the ground. Letting yourself be touched by mercy. Letting yourself be touched by divine grace. Allowing yourself to be lifted.

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In Prayer and Adoration, we practice holy vulnerability.
We stop performing.
We stop proving.
We simply let ourselves be seen.

As St. John Vianney described a farmer at prayer: "I look at Him, and He looks at me."

No hiding. No hustling for worth. Just presence.

Brene Brown is a research professor at the University of Houston's Graduate College of Social Work. She has spent decades studying courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy. She specializes in mental health and shame. She's a prominent figure in counseling and Women's History Month. According to Brene, to be vulnerable means to share your thoughts, emotions, fears, or needs without knowing how others will respond. ***Vulnerability is not about revealing your secrets to everyone - it's about choosing openness with the right people, at the right time, for the sake of real connection***. It means showing up as your real self, even when it feels uncomfortable. This is not weakness; this is courage in motion. While it might feel scary or unfamiliar at first, it is the foundation for deeper connection, emotional resilience, inner healing, some relief from internal pressure, stronger trust, and better connections. The purpose of choosing to be vulnerable is to have better and longer-lasting relationships.

In the Sacrament of Confession: Shame Meets Mercy:

Shame isolates. It says: "Don't let anyone see this."

"If they knew, they would leave." "You'll never change."

Mercy does the opposite. It brings darkness into light.

Brown often says that shame cannot survive being spoken in safe connection. Confession is exactly that. Not humiliation — but healing exposure. We bring what we fear makes us unlovable. And the Father responds not with rejection, but restoration and healing.

The enemy says: "You are what you've done."
The Father says: "You are My beloved."

From Hustling to Listening

The Father's command on the mountain is simple: "Listen to Him."

Not: hustle harder.
Not: perfect yourself.
Not: outrun your insecurity.

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Let us then Listen. Rest comes when we stop striving to prove our worth and start receiving it.

A Lenten Invitation: This week, gently examine your restlessness:

v Where am I over-functioning or over-performing?

v Where am I afraid to be seen?

v What am I chasing to feel enough?

v What would it look like to believe I am already beloved?

Bring that to Adoration. Bring that to Confession.

Let yourself be known — first by God, then by others.

Because Lent is not about becoming impressive. It is about becoming honest. It is about letting the Father's voice sink deep in our hearts. Friends, do me one favour right now, please turn to the next person on your right, tell him/her '**You are God's beloved'**. And now also turn to the next person on your left, tell him/her – '**You are God's beloved**'. Thank you so much. Indeed, God declared us His BELOVED, and we totally believe this truth. As God's beloved children, we now gather at the Eucharistic table to be fed and nourished by Jesus.

† You are my beloved.

† You don't have to build any tents to earn it.

† You don't have to run another race to prove it.

† You can stop.

† You can listen.

† You are enough.

† You can rest. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Fr Martin Ezeihuaku, MSP.