

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent  
February 28, 2010  
5:30 Liturgy**

**J.A. Loftus, S.J.**

**For today's homily I need to presume that you have all at least heard of two characters: Bode Miller and Charlie Brown. May I presume that? Good. They will both illustrate what today's gospel is really all about. We sometimes call them "transfiguration moments."**

**Bode Miller, one of the most successful skiers in U.S. history, claimed last week the elusive Gold Medal in the men's combined event in Vancouver. His gold medal, together with his already won silver and bronze medals, tied the Olympic record for the most alpine medals ever won in a single Olympic games; he joined the legends of the sport.**

**As he stood on the highest platform of the awards stage and listened to our national anthem played, it was so clear that he was transfixed in a "transfiguration moment." And afterwards he described for the press what the two-part run down the mountain felt like. He said: "On the last pitch, my legs started to feel wobbly, and it didn't even feel like I was looking at the gates anymore.... On a run like that you're functioning on inspiration and willpower. It's not muscle or anything deliberate. It's things you're drawing up from somewhere else." Like the memory of standing on that platform.**

**Four years earlier, in Turin, Italy, Bode Miller won nothing—nothing at all. He barely even placed. He was much better known for his late-night parties and hijinks, and he had a complete fall-out with the U.S. Olympic committee. He had retired from the sport. All that history made the transfiguration moment even more powerful and moving. Bode savored it! As can we all. Transformation!**

**Now here comes good old Charlie Brown to illustrate just the opposite. Charles Schulz, as some of you might remember, is one of my favorite theologians. I use him often in homilies.**

**There is one, classic, four-panel strip that has Charlie Brown musing in his bed. He says thoughtfully: “Sometimes I wake up knowing I’m going to have a bad day, and sure enough, I have a bad day.”**

**In the next panel, Charlie is now sitting up in bed, and says to himself: “Sometimes I wake up thinking I’m going to have a good day, but it always turns out to be a bad day.”**

**Looking even more perplexed and now sitting on the side of his bed, he says: “How come I never wake up thinking I’m going to have a good day and then really have a good day? Or how come I never wake up thinking I’m going to have a bad day and then have a good day?”**

**In the end, Charlie flops back down on his bed, pulls the cover up to his neck, and says simply: “My stomach hurts.”**

**Here comes the homily! My brothers and sisters, we all need to anticipate having good days and then have them turn out to be actually good days. We all need to have days when things seem clear—at least for the moment. We need to have days when, even if just for a minute, we seem to understand what it’s all about. Jesus’ earliest disciples were no exception. They needed what we now call the “transfiguration moment.”**

**We all need transfiguration moments. And we all—like Peter, James, and John—when we have such a moment, want to capture it in time and space and hang on for dear life to that moment. Let’s build tents to have it never go away or change. That was Peter’s suggestion; that’s a good first response too! Sounds frightfully familiar to me at least.**

**But what everyone needs to experience and remember –at least according to St. Luke and St. Mark as well—is that Jesus once stood on a mountaintop enjoying the glorified company of two of Israel’s greatest leaders: Elijah and Moses. That was who he really was, and it was a very good day for everyone who could recognize it—even if just for a moment.**

**The church retells this story early in every Lent to remind us that it is**

**important to have good days and to remember and cherish them. Lent is time to *repent*. That is a word that literally means “turn around” a bit. Turn yourself around and look carefully. That’s all repent means. Let yourself have a *metanoia* (to use the Greek word for repent). And when you turn yourself around a bit, don’t just think of the “bad days,” the bad stuff, the negative in yourself and your environment. Remember and cherish the transfiguration moments too. They are just as important for salvation.**

**There are transparent moments of God’s love and care for ourselves and for those whom we love. Remember them today. And be grateful for the memories of transfiguration in your own life. They are gifts to be savored on the journey of Lent, treasures to be shared on the path to Holy Week. That is the gift of today’s liturgy.**

**So remember and celebrate with Bode. But remember Charlie Brown too. When you are next lying perplexed in your bed—perhaps this evening or tomorrow morning—sometimes you do wake up thinking you are going to have a bad day, and you actually have had a good one. Repent—turn yourself around—and be grateful. And don’t forget to celebrate your very own transfiguration moments. Sometimes it all does seem to make sense—even if just for a moment. The journey of Lent continues. And it’s not meant to be**

**only bleak. Happy Lent everyone!**