**Reflection for the second Sunday of Lent,** on the Entrance antiphon (Mass)

Today the liturgy offers us two possible entrance antiphons. Let us consider the one taken from psalm 26: *Of you my heart has spoken, ‘Seek his face.’ It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; hide not your face from me.*

The Jewish people understood that no one could see the face of God and live. To encounter the divinity full-on, “face-to-face”, would be too much for anyone, too overwhelming. The vision of the radiance of the divine presence would cause a human meltdown. Yet at the same time we have an inbuilt desire and longing for God; an inner urging coming from the depths of our heart says to us, “Seek the face of God!” We want and need and long to encounter the divine, which at the same time is beyond our capacity to endure – at least in our earthly life.

The Gospel reading for today, the second Sunday of Lent, tells of Jesus’ Transfiguration. He took three disciples with him up the mountain, the place of special encounter with God, and in their presence he was “transfigured”, so that they saw the vision of the divine presence in him, and were overwhelmed. They saw the face of God in the face of Jesus.

We too seek the face of God. If we are quiet enough and courageous enough to listen to our hearts, we hear the deep urge: *Seek God’s face, seek the transcendent, seek the holy!* We are made for God, and that impulse is wired into us.

Knowing that God’s face is made visible to us in the person of Jesus, our urge to seek the face of God leads us to Jesus, to learn about him, to know him, to follow him. It leads us to reflect prayerfully on his word, and to spend time in his presence.

But the face of God is also visible to us in the face of others, especially in the face of those who suffer. Sometimes when we ask God, *Hide not your face from me!* the prayer is answered by the presence around us of the poor, those who need our help, the “least” of the brothers and sisters of Jesus. Seeking God’s face will demand that we go out of ourselves in loving service to them.

Eyes that seek to look on the brightness of God must be pure. Our search for God will call us to purification, to wash away anything that would blur or distort our vision. Lent offers us a time to consider with attention what it is that we need to adopt, or to get rid of, or restore, in order best to be able to see that face of God for which we long and pray.

*Of you my heart has spoken, ‘Seek his face.’ It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; hide not your face from me.*

Here is the Latin chant version of this antiphon: *(JPEG file)*



You can hear it sung here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RnUz0Qju9uM> (*The Graduale Project*)