

# Love the Lord by serving others

By Father Albert Shamon  
Courier columnist

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Luke 9:28-36; (R1) Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18; (R2) Philippians 3:17-4:1.

"Welcome to San Diego. Now go home," one bumper sticker read. Another one said, "Enjoy San Diego. Then go home."

San Diego, Calif., is a friendly city, bursting with promise. It is now the seventh largest city in the United States. Many of its residents believe it is big enough already so they have these bumper stickers on their cars.

And to make sure you take the hint, they have put their airport right in the middle of the city.

We might say that this not-so-subtle hint by San Diego residents reminds us of the Gospel's message about the transfiguration. Peter, James and John wanted to stay up on the mountain of glory. Jesus took them down. There are two dimensions in the Christian life: the mountain of exultation and the valley of service.

We all hunger to live on the

mountaintop. Who can blame Peter for suggesting that they build three booths — one for the Master, one for Moses, and one for Elijah — so that they could stay on the mountain forever?

A distraught mother once wrote this note to Dr. Albert Einstein:

Dear Mr. Einstein:

My son thinks he is Jesus. I write to ask if you will talk to him. For no one else will he come down from the mountain, and he has been there for three weeks. Will you do this for a broken-hearted mother?

Einstein spoke with the boy, and he came down from the mountain. The U.S. physicist, who was born in Germany, later explained: "I didn't argue with his delusions. Rather I reminded him that Jesus came down from the mountain to become a fisher among men."

Jesus did come down from the mountaintop, so did Peter, James and John. The moments of exultation with God are not worth having if they do not lead us back down into the valley of service.

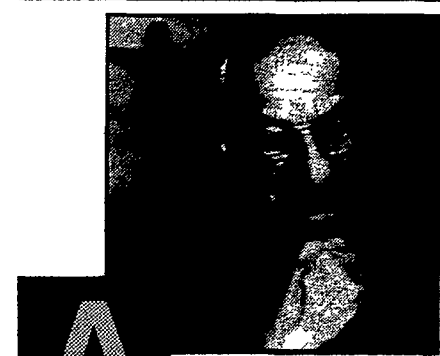
When some people have a mountaintop experience, they exclaim,

"This is it!" They also think they have arrived spiritually. The truth is they have not, unless the mountaintop experience leads them back to the valley of reality and to the world in need.

Jesus would not let the apostles stay on the mountaintop because people in the valley needed them. No matter how wonderful the mountain, they needed to go back to where the people lived and worked.

Jesus is still saying this to people today. "I know you would rather stay where you are, but there are people who need you. It's all right to come up on the mountain from time to time. But don't forget that your main purpose is to spread my love to other people. That means that you must leave the mountain and go to where others are."

I hope you receive great blessings from the Mass. I hope you experience Christ's love during holy Communion. That is wonderful. But remember there are people outside the church's walls who need your love and your faith's witness. They may live next door, or they may work in the office with you. You



**A** WORD FOR SUNDAY

may pass them by on the street as you go home.

Jesus says, "Go to love and serve the Lord." Love the Lord by serving others. Yes, come to Mass to be fed by God's word and nourished by the bread of life. But then go to love and serve the Lord in others.

"Welcome to the mountain. Now go home."

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