

*The Reason for the Journey*  
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Last week we began the season of Lent by reflecting on the testing of Jesus in the desert. That episode provided us with a model for observing Lent: Just as Jesus fasted and prayed forty days before beginning his ministry, so we fast and pray the forty days of Lent to prepare ourselves for Easter.

The journey of Lent, however, can be difficult, especially at the beginning. At the outset, it seems that the journey will never end. At the outset we can become discouraged and complain, “The journey is too long; the struggle is too great; I cannot finish what I have begun.” At such moments we must fix our eyes on the goal. We must remind ourselves why we have undertaken the journey; we must recall where we are going.

Today’s readings provide us with three examples of what it means to focus our vision on the goal of our journey. When Abraham was old and without children, wandering in a foreign land, God gave him a glimpse of what would be if he completed his journey of faith: “Look up at sky, and count the stars if you can, for just so shall your descendants be.” When Jesus was about to undertake his fateful journey to Jerusalem, where he would be rejected, suffer, and die, God granted him a taste of the resurrection glory that would be his when he completed the journey. And when St. Paul was in prison, he encouraged the Philippians to complete their journey of faith by imitating him. Join others in imitating me, he proclaimed, because I have suffered for Christ. Join others in imitating me, he said, because I have learned to live in light of the resurrection glory that belongs to those who suffer with Christ. Paul was not discouraged by his suffering and imprisonment, for he knew that the goal of his journey was to be united with Christ. This is why he wrote, “Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body.”

Resurrection life is the goal of our journey; that is where we are going. This is why we have undertaken the journey of faith; this is why we are making our Lenten pilgrimage. *We are waiting for that moment* when we will be perfectly conformed to the risen Lord. *We are waiting for that moment* when we will be as Christ is. *We are waiting for that moment* when our bodies will be changed and transfigured forever. *We are waiting for that moment* when we will be like the risen and glorified Christ. The goal of our journey is nothing less than life, the fullness of life, eternal life, the life that death cannot be destroyed.

If we remember the goal of the journey, we can endure all things. If we know where we are going, the journey will not be long. If we keep our eyes on the finish line, we will complete the journey we have begun.