

Second Sunday of Lent Gen. 12.1-4, 2 Tim. 1. 8-10, Mt. 17.1-9

The key to all three of today's readings is transformation and a response to God's call. A transformation is a thorough, dramatic, and often permanent change in form, appearance, nature, or character. The readings invite us both to work with the Holy Spirit as He goes about transforming us and renewing our lives during Lent, and to learn from His teachings.

In today's first reading from the Book of Genesis we hear that Abram's blind obedience to God transforms the childless and pagan Abram into a believer in the one true God. It is through Abram, God begins to regather His people into one, a process that finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is about the transfiguration of Jesus. This is the traditional reading for the second Sunday of Lent but also on August 6. The transfiguration is found in all three synoptic Gospels (Matthew 17. 1-9, Mark 9. 2-10, Luke 9. 28-36). Jesus goes **up** the mountain to be transfigured and He brings with Him Peter, James and John. Note that Peter is listed first. Peter, who in Matthew 16 is made Pope, is told by Jesus that he is going to build the Church upon him. James is the voice, the loudest evangelist. It is James who is killed first by Herod after the Crucifixion. John who is the beloved. These three are referred to as Jesus' inner circle.

Transfiguration comes from the Latin roots trans (across) and figura (form or shape). It signifies a change of form or appearance. Jesus' face becomes "like the sun," His clothes become "white as the light." This reflects Jesus' divinity in an extraordinary way. Peter, James and John are brought to witness this event to grow their faith so that they can proclaim truly and confidently that Jesus is the Son of God. St. Peter writes, "we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased' we heard this voice from heaven" (2 Peter 1.17-18).

Jesus' transfiguration, His transformation, His change should point us or lead us to think about the Passion, Crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It also points to transubstantiation, the changing of the bread and wine into the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ. The appearance of bread and wine remain but the substance is the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ.

The Trinity is present in the transfiguration just as it is in the transubstantiation. Remember God's words "**Listen to Him.**" God is calling us to listen to Him. We listen to Him through the Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

We listen to **Him** through the graces received through the Sacraments established by Jesus Christ and carrying through His Church built upon Peter.

In the second reading from St. Paul to Timothy, we are called to be ready to bear hardship for the Gospel's sake. St. Paul is chained and in prison at the time of this writing. St. Paul calls us to "bear your share of hardship for the gospel with strength that comes from God." We need to trust in the grace given us by God, to live in obedience rather than rely on our own merits. St. Paul's words tell us why to follow God, "He saved us and called us to a holy life," and the reward is "through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

Change is difficult but St. Paul reminds us that even in the midst of suffering, we can count on the work of the Holy Spirit to grant us courage and strength needed to carry out God's will. Our salvation, which is accomplished through Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross, is the fruit of His love for us. This work of salvation continues through the teaching and sacraments of the Church which were established by Jesus Christ. While our hope is eternal life with God, a hope for immortality we look forward to share in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

God calls each and every one of us to transform this Lenten season and throughout our lives. To turn away from sin and toward Him. To use the Sacraments of the Church so we can receive the graces needed to strengthen our journey, our journey to eternal life with Him. Jesus' radiant brightness gives us a glimpse of what eternal life will look like.

Let us pray for the strength to have total trust and obedience in God. Let us pray that by carrying our cross, that during the daily challenges of life the Holy Spirit may grant us the courage and strength to carry out God's will. May the use of Sacred Scripture and the Sacraments fill us with the graces we need to transform ourselves into the best disciples we can be to answer God's call. Let us listen to Him!