

Second Sunday of Lent Cycle A
Gn. 12.1-4, 2 Tim. 1.8-10, Mt. 17.1-9

Today's first reading from the Book of Genesis speaks of a "covenant" God made with Abram. A covenant is the solemn promise between God and man. In this case God promises Abram a "great nation and a great name" if Abram will Trust in God. To demonstrate this trust Abram must leave his comfort zone and start anew. If Abram fulfills this journey of trust God will reward him with blessings and all the "communities of the earth will find blessing in you {Abram}. Abram will become the Father to all nations.

In the Second Letter from St. Paul to Timothy we are encouraged to endure our share of suffering for the Gospel. Our strength will come from God. Like Abram, St Paul is calling upon us to trust in God's plan. Through Jesus Christ we receive graces, this is where our strength comes from. No matter how down and out we may feel we can strengthen ourselves through frequent use of the sacraments. Jesus has come to earth in a human form to demonstrate the love of God for us.

Today's Gospel reading is not only about Jesus being transformed but so much is revealed. First note that Jesus brings with Him up the mountain only Peter, James and John. These three Apostles are referred to as Jesus' band of three. Jesus will single these three out again when He calls them to pray with Him in the garden of Gethsemane. Dr. Edward Sri writes; Jesus "displays His glory for the sake of Peter, James, and John in a way that serves to deepen their understanding of His identity and mission at this crucial juncture in his ministry." Peter is always listed first as Peter has been put in charge; given the "keys to the kingdom" (Mt. 16.16). James is nicknamed thunder as he is very bold in his proclamation and defense of faith, and John is the beloved.

The next thing revealed is that Jesus' face "shone like the sun." This recalls Moses' shining face when he came down Mount Sinai (Ex. 34.29-35). St. Matthew highlights how Jesus outshines Moses. Moses' face shone because it **reflected** the divine glory he had **seen** where Jesus' face shines with **His own glory**. St. Thomas Aquinas writes, "Here he revealed the future glory, where bodies will be brilliant and

splendid. And this brilliance was not from the essence, but from the brilliance of the interior soul, full of charity; ‘then will your light break forth as the morning’, and there follows ‘and the glory of the Lord will gather you up (IS 58.8).’ The revelation is not complete as “His clothes became white as light.” Again St. Thomas Aquinas indicates, “Snow has a radiance and coldness, as saints have the radiance of glory; *the just will shine, and will run to and fro like sparks among the reeds (Wis 3.7)*, Likewise, the fire of concupiscence (the inclination to sin) is cooled in them.” This is what we have to look forward to.

Now we have the appearance of Moses and Elijah. Both Moses the lawgiver and Elijah the prophet were well known miracle workers who fasted for forty days (Ex. 24.18, 34.28 and 1 Kings 19.8). Both were rejected by some of God’s people and both encountered God’s glory on Mount Sinai. Some theologians believe that Moses represents the law and Elijah represents the prophets as a summing up or representing the whole of the Old Testament (Lk. 24.17).

Lastly we are told that “A bright cloud cast a shadow over them.” This represents the Holy Spirit. The voice from the cloud says, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” We now have a manifestation of the Lord as the Holy Trinity is revealed to the three Apostles. This is done to confirm their faith that Jesus is the Messiah especially as they prepare to face the approaching crucifixion of Jesus. God gives the Apostles a specific direction; “listen to him.” The Apostles and all of us are directed to Listen to Jesus, to TRUST in Him.

One cannot help to recall the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan where we also heard the voice of God. The only difference is now we receive the direction to “listen to Him.” The CCC #556 summarizes the relationship of these two events in the following way: “Jesus’ baptism proclaimed ‘the mystery of the first regeneration,’ namely our Baptism.” While “the Transfiguration ‘is the sacrament of the second regeneration’: our own Resurrection. From now on we share in the Lord’s Resurrection through the Spirit who acts in the sacraments of the Body of Christ. The Transfiguration gives us a foretaste of Christ’s

glorious coming, when he 'will change our lowly body to be like His glorious body." We should not fear nor panic for God has given us the direction to listen to Him. Receive the Sacraments and receive the graces of God.

We are called today to **trust** in God's plan. To listen to Jesus' words as revealed to us through Sacred Scripture. Recall Mother Mary's words in John 2.5, "do whatever he tells you." This Lenten season listen, open our hearts, our minds, and our ears. Listen to the words of Jesus and do what he tells us. Let our actions be part of our prayer, and let the words of Jesus guide us so we can prepare our interior as well as our exterior through the use of the sacraments.