

Lectio Divina of the Second Sunday in Lent (February 28/2021)

**THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**

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**In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**

**Opening Prayer:** Lord, We come to you at different parts of the mountain. At times, our lives become overwhelmed with not having enough time. Help us to follow you wherever you lead us, and be with us during our life moments. Help us in gaining strength to get up for the journey. Help us open our minds to understand you are our guide, you are our way to the mountain top. Help open our eyes to see where your love shines forth in dazzling white and in majestic beauty. Guide us to the mountain top where we can see all that you have created, that you walk along side us every part of our journey and then help us to not stay at the mountain top, but learn from Peter that we are to go into the valley, where your ministry lies. Open our hands to join together in the work and ministry you call us to do. Guide us during hardships at home. Guide our leaders to peaceful discernment of how to govern our nation. We come praying that your dazzling glory may fill our life and may the glory enter into each of us as we read and reflect your words together. Hear our prayer and may we experience your divine encounter as we get into our prayerful Lectio Divina of the coming Sunday. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**First Reading: A Reading from the book of Genesis 22: 1-2, 9, 10-13, 15-18**

God put Abraham to the test. He called to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am!” he replied. Then God said: “Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him up as a holocaust on a height that I will point out to you.” When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. Then he reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the Lord’s messenger called to him from heaven, “Abraham, Abraham!” “Here I am!” he answered. “Do not lay your hand on the boy,” said the messenger. “Do not do the least thing to him. I know now how devoted you are to God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son.” As Abraham looked about, he spied a ram caught by its horns in the thicket. So he went and took the ram and offered it up as a holocaust in place of his son. Again the Lord’s messenger called to Abraham from heaven and said: “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you acted as you did in not withholding from me your beloved son, I will bless you abundantly and make your descendants as countless as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants shall take possession of the gates of their enemies, and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing—all this because you obeyed my command.”

**(The Word of the Lord/ Thanks be to God)**

**Commentary:** God tested him not to make him fall but to deepen his capacity to obey God and thus develop his character. Abraham began one of the greatest acts of obedience when the Lord

asked him to travel 50 miles to Mount Moriah near the site of Jerusalem to sacrifice his son Issac. God did not want Issac to die but he wanted Abraham to sacrifice Issac in his heart so it would be clear that Abraham loved God more than he loved his promised and long awaited son. When Abraham obeyed God, he received abundant blessings, firstly God gave Abraham's descendants the ability to conquer their enemies. Secondly God promised Abraham children and grandchildren who would in turn bless the whole earth. Most often we think of blessings as gifts to be enjoyed. But when God blesses us, his blessings are intended to overflow to others.

**Responsorial Psalm (116) I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.**

I believed, even when I said, "I am greatly afflicted."  
Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.

***R. I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.***

O Lord, I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your handmaid;  
you have loosed my bonds. To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving,  
and I will call upon the name of the Lord.

***R. I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.***

My vows to the Lord I will pay in the presence of all his people,  
In the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem.

***R. I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.***

**Commentary:** The Bible tells us that Jesus sang with his disciples on the night before his crucifixion (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26). What exactly did they sing? They sang the Hallel psalms 113-118. This portion of scripture is traditionally sung throughout the Passover meal. This is the same meal Jesus partook of with his disciples on his final night in the upper room just before they went to the Mount of Olives to pray (Mark 14:12-16). Why did they sing? What makes these Psalms so important is that they are historical and prophetic. The Psalmist in 116 rejoices in God who has provided salvation for his people and he continues to look toward the Lord for a future salvation.

**Second Reading: A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Romans 8:31-34**

Brothers and sisters: If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him? Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us, who will condemn? Christ Jesus it is who died—or, rather, was raised who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

***(The Word of the Lord/ Thanks be to God)***

**Commentary:** These verses were written to a church that would soon undergo terrible persecution. St. Paul reaffirms God's profound love for his people. These verses contain one of

the most comforting promises in all the Scriptures. Believers have always had to face hardships in many forms. Persecution, illness, imprisonment even death. These could cause them to fear that they have been abandoned by Christ. But Paul exclaims that it is impossible to be separated from Christ whose death is proof of his unconquerable love for us. Nothing can stop Christ's constant presence with us.

**Gospel Reading: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark 9:2-10**

Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified. Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; from the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them. As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant.

*(The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ / Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ)*

**Meditation:** The Scene of the Transfiguration is one of the most captivating and thrilling scenes of the Gospels. It's interesting to see that this scene takes place on a high mountain. The location of the Transfiguration is traditionally identified with Mount Tabor. Why does this take place in mountain? Because mountain is the place of God's presence. In Hebrew it is called El Shaddai. Moses met the Lord in the burning bush at Mount Horeb (Ex 3:1-4). After his encounter with God on Sinai, Moses' face shone so brightly that the people were frightened, and thereafter, whenever Moses went into the Tent to consult the Lord, he had to wear a veil over his face when he came out (Ex 34:29-35). Elijah traveled for forty days to Mt. Horeb on the strength of the food brought by an angel (1 Kings 19:8). At Mt. Horeb, Elijah sought refuge in a cave as the glory of the Lord passed over him (1 Kings 19:9-18). Finally, Elijah was taken directly to heaven in a chariot of fire without seeing death (2 Kings 2:11 -15). Jesus was joined by the presence of these Mountain figures - Moses and Elijah. Moses is the Man of the "Mount of Sinai" and "Mount Nebo" who represents the Law of God. Elijah is the Man of the "Mount of Carmel" representing the Prophets of God! Jesus is the Fulfillment of all the Laws and the Prophets!

**Voice of God from the cloud:** The book of Exodus describes God speaking to Moses at Mount Sinai from the cloud. The cloud is the presence of God. The cloud led the Israelites on their journey and showed them the glory of the Lord before they were fed by manna. Thus The transfiguration story is full of theophanies of God for reflection and contemplation.

**What is the purpose of the Transfiguration Scene?** The primary purpose of Jesus' transfiguration was to allow him to consult his heavenly Father and ascertain His plan for His Son's suffering, death and resurrection. The secondary aim was to make his chosen disciples

aware of his divine glory so that they might not have ambitious and worldly desires of acquiring political kingdom after Jesus' departure. Thirdly, for us, the Transfiguration is to look further, to imagine deeper and to hear beyond. Like Jesus, We will also undergo a transformation when our life journey is over on this earth, experience a heavenly life, freed from pain and sufferings. In deep prayer and reflection, We are invited to imagine the heavenly realities and voice of God.

**We all need a 'Transfiguration Moment and experience in our lives already now. How?** We need to go beyond the peripheral problems of life like hardships in our physical and spiritual life to climb the Mountain of Spiritual Closeness and Presence of the Lord and share in the joy of the Transfiguration. Do we see, imagine and hear beyond the mere basic realities and peripherals of life? This requires that we let go ourselves into the hands of God. And it is when we "throw ourselves into the Hands of God and receive what He gives us". That is the experience of Transfiguration! Yes, when human offering is joined to the mighty power of God, there is Transfiguration. When Divine Grace descends on our human experiences, there is Transfiguration. The Lord underwent the Transfiguration. The Disciples shared in this joy. In this season of transformation and transfiguration, The Lord invites us to "throw ourselves into His Hands of God, and receive what He gives us".

**Let us be conscious of Transfiguration moments that have taken/ continue to take place in our life.** The first transformation has already taken place on the day of our Baptism by washing away our original sin and transforming us into children of God and heirs of heaven. We have to keep our baptismal transformation alive by fighting our sins and winning over the trials and temptations of our life. Each Holy Mass is a moment of Transfiguration as the bread and wine changing into the living body and blood of the crucified, risen and glorified Jesus. Just as Jesus' transfiguration strengthened the apostles in their time of trial, each holy Mass should be our source of heavenly strength against temptations, and our renewal during Lent. Each time we receive one of the sacraments, we are transformed: For example, baptism transforms us into sons and daughters of God and heirs of heaven. Confirmation makes us temples of the Holy Spirit and warriors of God. By the sacrament of reconciliation, God brings us back to the path of holiness.

**Prayer:** Loving Father, thank you for this evening of our weekly bible study and Lectio Divina. Grant us strength, hope, peace and joy. In our dark times and in times of despair, may we join together collectively praying for each one of our loved ones, of our community both local and global. Open our eyes, O God of light, that we may see. Open our eyes to the mystery of Jesus' transfiguration. Open our eyes to see Elijah and Moses, at the top of the mountain. Open our eyes to see Peter, James and John and their awe moments in your Son's glorious moment. Open our hearts to loving all who we come in contact with. Sharing your love with others, and allowing our own hearts to be opened as well. Help us to keep climbing, aid us on our journey, that with all of our senses open, with our full bodies present, you are there with us, and we will be there for one another. We make this prayer through christ our Lord. Hail Mary and Priestly blessing.