

Lectio Divina of the Second Sunday in Lent A

Opening Prayer: Lord, We gather together to 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. Your Son was glorified on earth together with You, with the glory which He had with You before the world was. We thank You for sending Your only begotten Son so that we could all be saved and so that we could have an example on how to live on earth. Lord, your Son Jesus Christ was wonderfully transfigured before chosen witnesses upon the holy mountain, and spoke of the exodus he would accomplish at Jerusalem: give us strength so to hear his voice and bear our cross that in the world to come we may see him as he is. We make this prayer through christ our Lord Amen.

First Reading: A reading from the book of Genesis 12:1-4 The LORD said to Abram: "Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you. "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you." Abram went as the LORD directed him.

Commentary: The reading from Genesis explains how Abraham's blind obedience to God at His command transformed childless Abram into the Patriarch Abraham, a believer in the one God. Abram was a pagan and prosperous in land and livestock, but he had no children. That was considered to be the most serious of all possible deprivations. So God challenged him with an offer: "I will make of you a great nation." But God's requirements were absolute: "Go forth from the land of your kin." Abram was from Ur in Chaldea (Gn 11:31) and he journeyed with his family to Haran in upper Mesopotamia, about 900 miles north of Ur. He followed the call of God and God made him the father of multitude. God asks us, too, to leave our old life of sin behind, to go forth with Him into a period of repentance, renewal of life and transformation, and to give Him the whole of our being in loving surrender forever.

Responsorial Psalm 33 **Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.**

Upright is the word of the LORD, and all his works are trustworthy.
He loves justice and right; of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full.

Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him,
upon those who hope for his kindness,
To deliver them from death and preserve them in spite of famine.

Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Our soul waits for the LORD, who is our help and our shield.
May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us who have put our hope in you.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Second Reading: A reading from the second letter of St. Paul to Timothy

1:8-10 Beloved: Bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God. He saved us and called us to a holy life, not according to our works but according to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began, but now made manifest through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ/ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ)

Commentary: St. Paul's letter to Timothy explains the type of Lenten life-transformation expected of us. "Bear your share of hardship for the Gospel with the strength that comes from God." Timothy was afraid of preaching because of mounting persecution in his time. Paul told Timothy to expect suffering. But Paul promised him that God would give him strength and that he would be ready when it was his turn to suffer. In this passage, Paul gives us a brief summary of the gospel. God loves us, called us, and sent Jesus to die for us. We can have eternal life through faith in him because he broke the power of death through his resurrection.

Gospel Reading: A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew

17:1-9 Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid." And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone. As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus charged them,

"Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." (The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ/Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ)

Meditation: The Scene of the Transfiguration is one of the most thrilling scenes of the Gospels. 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. (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). 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.

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.

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.

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. 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, The Lord invites us to "throw ourselves into His Hands of God, and receive what He gives us".

Concluding prayer: Father, At the Transfiguration, You showed Jesus in glory, a glimpse of what His disciples would see in His risen life. Bless us in our humanity, with an awareness of Your presence. Lead us to share in Your divine life even in our daily struggle. Help us to deepen our knowledge of the Law and the Prophets, channels of Your grace throughout history, and signposts for our journey. Amen. (Hail Mary/ Blessing)