

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent - A  
Genesis 12:1-4a;  
II Timothy 1:8b-10;  
Matthew 17:1-9  
Little Flower - 3/5/23

My Brothers and Sisters,

Just as the Gospel for the First Sunday of Lent is always the story of Jesus forty-day fast in the desert and his temptations by the devil, the Gospel of the Second Sunday of Lent always tells the story of Jesus' transfiguration.

The story of the Transfiguration is very rich in meaning. Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a high mountain and was transfigured before them, giving them a glimpse of his future glory. Moses and Elijah also appeared to them and conversed with Jesus. The two major parts of the Old Testament are the Law and the Prophets. Moses represented the Law. Elijah represented the Prophets. By appearing and conversing with Jesus, they revealed that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament Law and the Prophets.

If that were not enough validation of Jesus, a cloud then overshadowed them, and from the cloud came the voice of God the Father: "*This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.*" We need to remember that this is one of only three times we hear the voice of God the Father in the New Testament. In this verse, God the Father authenticates Jesus as his beloved Son. In other words, Jesus not only fulfills the Law and the Prophets. Jesus is the Son of God.

The story of the Transfiguration has three key elements: Jesus' transfiguration, the appearance of Moses and Elijah, and the voice of God the Father. By giving them a glimpse of his future glory, Jesus was preparing them for his coming passion and death. Jesus was giving them hope! Jesus' Transfiguration also gives us a glimpse of our future glory if we are transformed, transfigured, into the likeness of the Risen Christ, if we become the-best-version-of-ourselves. Also, as we deal with the struggles in our own lives, Jesus' transfiguration also gives us hope.

In his First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul tells us that after his resurrection, Jesus became "*a life-giving spirit*" [I Cor. 15:45]. Jesus sends his Holy Spirit of love into our hearts. Only love is life giving. We become life giving when we love others. Paradoxically, loving others we grow into the likeness of the Risen Christ.

When the disciples heard the voice of God, "*they fell prostrate and were very much afraid.*" Jesus tells them not to be afraid. We hear the words *fear* and *afraid* many times in the Gospels. In the Gospels, people are often afraid when Jesus reveals himself. This can be equally true when Jesus reveals himself to us. However, at other times, they are afraid for all the reasons we are often afraid. Today so many people suffer from fear and anxiety. When we are afraid or anxious, we would do well to remember Jesus' words in John's Gospel: "*I have told you all this so that you may find peace in me. In the world you will have trouble, but be brave: I have conquered the world*" [John 16:33; JB, 1966].

According to St. Paul, Abraham is our father in faith. Today's first reading is a key moment in God's relationship with Abraham. One day God asked him to leave his homeland, his security, and set off on a journey for an unknown land and an unknown future with only God's word of promise to guide him. This is the deepest meaning of faith.

Our life is a journey but also a journey of faith. God asks us, like Abraham, to give up our search for security and to entrust our lives and our futures to him and to his word of promise, Jesus Christ. Likewise, we refer to Lent as a journey. To enter fully into the spirit of Lent is to entrust our lives and futures to God and to Jesus, God's word of promise. As Paul wrote to Timothy, "*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.*"