

- One of the things that I find particularly interesting about the Transfiguration—which we just heard of in the Gospel—is that it is attested to independent of the Gospels in Peter’s 2nd letter: “... 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 borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.” (2 Peter 1:16-18 RSV)
- The Transfiguration occurs right after Jesus confirms Peter’s insight that He is the Messiah and Son of God...and yet He would suffer and die.
- No doubt the apostles asked themselves: “How can this be?”—how can He be the great king, even the Son of God...and yet die, seemingly without the power to save Himself?
- And so, to bolster their faith, at the Transfiguration Jesus allows them a merest glimpse of His divine glory so that they could witness unquestionably that divine power working in Him... hearing the voice of the Father confirming that Jesus was His beloved son.
- This glimpse of His divinity on the mountain of the Transfiguration would contrast and complement His agony on the Mount of Olives...when these same three apostles—Peter, James and John—would witness Him in all His humanity.
- That’s something in each of us—we are human, and yet, within each of us, is a spark of the divine.
- Like Jesus, we, too, experience those times of joy, and those times of sorrow.

- But we ought to recall that during both events—His ecstasy and His agony—Jesus prayed. So ought we in all the times of our lives.
- Jesus and the disciples going up the mountain recalls to us Moses going up Mt. Sinai, where God spoke to Moses from the burning bush...where God gave the Moses the Ten Commandments...and where the prophet Elijah also heard the voice of God.
- Jesus, as God, uses this imagery to reinforce in the apostles—and in us—the truth of His message and of His mission.
- And here at the Transfiguration these two greatest figures of the Old Testament meet...and again speak w/ God in the person of Jesus.
- Moses represents the Jewish Law, and Elijah represents prophecy leading to Jesus. These are the two pivots around which the worship of God revolved...and still does, but have been fulfilled and expanded by Christ.
- After all, Jesus' two great commandments—loving God with whole heart, and one's neighbor as oneself—He tells us fulfill all the law and the prophets—the law personified by the law-giver Moses, and the prophets, personified in the greatest OT prophet: Elijah.
- In this we see not only the consistency w/in the Bible as a whole, but witness the never-changing nature of God Himself.
- As we read in the letter to the Hebrews: *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings...”* (Heb 13:8-9 RSV)

- This is why, when someone proposes some change in basic doctrinal teaching which diverges from what the Church has taught in the past, we pay him no heed. God does not change...nor change His mind.

- The coming together of Moses and Elijah with Jesus show that Jesus is the embodiment, the fulfillment, and the incarnation of the Word of God...and when the disciples look up, they no longer see Moses and Elijah, but Jesus alone. The Law and the prophets, and much more, are completely fulfilled in Him.
- That is why there will be no more revelation from God—because in Jesus is the complete and whole Word of God. There IS no other.
- God here doesn't write on tablets of stone. He simply gives us the divine command: "*Listen to Him.*"...HE is my Word.
- And when Jesus comes, God fully reveals the totality of love He has for us...His desire for a deep and even individual, personal relationship with each one of us.
- When the Exodus Jews came to Mt. Sinai, God demonstrated His power and majesty through fire and thunder...the people forbidden to even touch the mountain of God under pain of death. Only Moses was allowed to ascend.
- But here...the disciples ascend with Jesus up the mountain—moving toward Heaven with Him.
- Thus Jesus removes that fear of coming close to God. In Matthew's version of the Transfiguration, he tells us: "*Jesus came and ouched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear."*
(Mat 17:7 RSV)

- No longer a dark cloud of power, but rather the bright cloud of God's love—indeed, the Holy Spirit.
- On Mt. Sinai Moses was forbidden to look at the face of God; but here, the disciples behold the glorified face of the Jesus, who IS God.

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- Jesus came first and foremost to emphasize God's love—proven by His own sacrifice of Himself upon the cross for our salvation—and those who follow him need not be afraid.
 - Our first reading recalled Abraham tested by God and told to sacrifice his son Isaac...but at the final moment, God stays Abraham's hand and saves Isaac's life.
 - And yet...the mercy God gives Abraham He does not even save for Himself, showing total and absolute love that He has for us in the sacrifice of His own Son for our redemption...taking upon Himself the just punishment that OUR sins deserve.
 - As we hear on Easter Vigil: *“O love, O charity beyond all telling, to ransom a slave, you gave away your Son...”*
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 - St. Paul tells us in the 2nd reading: *“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?”*
 - Oh...we may have trials...we may suffer persecution...we may even have martyrdom as our brothers and sisters even now in the Middle East. If we learn anything from history, it is that hatred of the world for Christ and Christians never dies.
 - But, when we are faithful to Our Lord, St. Paul assures us, none can touch our souls... *“...not tribulation, or distress, or*

persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For [nothing] in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom 8:35-39)

Reading 1 Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 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."

Responsorial Psalm Ps 116:10, 15, 16-17, 18-19

R. (116:9) **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.

Reading 2 Rom 8:31b-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.

Gospel Mk 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.

Year B—Lent, 2nd Sunday
2015

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.