- Always Jesus' Transfiguration—traditionally thought to be at Mt. Tabor in Galilee—reminds us unmistakably not only of His being God incarnate among us, but of our <u>own</u> destiny...if we are His faithful disciples.
- Jesus and the disciples going up the mountain recalls Moses ascending Mount Sinai—where God spoke to him from the burning bush...where God gave him the Ten Commandments... and where the prophet Elijah heard the voice of God.
- And here again those two greatest figures of the Old Testament meet...and again speak w/ God—Jesus.

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- The two main sections of the scriptures for the Jews were the Law and the Prophets—writings inspired by God—and the coming together of Moses and Elijah conversing with Jesus shows that Jesus is the embodiment—the incarnation—of the Word of God.
- The disciples look up, and no longer see Moses and Elijah, but Jesus only...indicating that the Law and the prophets—and much more—are completely fulfilled in Christ.
- That is why the Church teaches that there will be no <u>new</u> revelation from God to us, because there <u>IS</u> no other Word. Jesus is the <u>complete</u> and <u>total</u> revelation of the Word of God.
- As Jesus says in John's Gospel: "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30 RSV), and later: "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father..." (John 14:9 RSV)
- At Sinai, the power of God descended in a cloud, engulfed the mountain, and the Father's voice came forth to Moses, and the "finger of God" wrote the Ten Commandments on two tablets of stone.

- But at the Transfiguration, there are no tablets, because <u>Jesus</u> is the His Word...and thus the Father commands: "*Listen to <u>Him</u>*."
- Both at Jesus' baptism and at the Transfiguration we see the physical manifestation of the Holy Trinity—the Father's voice, the Son in body, and the Holy Spirit as a dove and cloud respectively, and at both the Father affirms: "This is my beloved Son."

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- At Sinai the mysterious God asserts His power before the Israelites to give them faith, trust, hope and reverence.
- But at the Transfiguration the mountain is covered by a brightness of God's <u>love</u>—the Holy Spirit.
- At Sinai the people were forbidden to even touch the base of the mountain of God, to instill that deep reverence and awe...as the disciples at Tabor no doubt remembered, for at hearing the voice of God, "...they fell prostrate and were very much afraid"...but then Jesus—God—"...came and touched them", and said: "Rise, and do not be afraid."
- Jesus came first and foremost to emphasize God's love—indisputably proven by His acceptance of the cross—and thus those who truly follow him need not be afraid.
- For, as Jesus tells the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4: "... the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him." (John 4:23 RSV)

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At Sinai only <u>Moses</u> was allowed to ascend, indicating to the people that <u>he</u> was to be their day-to-day guide; but at Tabor it is a <u>group</u> of disciples ascending—Peter, James and John—representing the future Church of God as the world's guide in the way of Christ.

- Of course, the Transfiguration—as do <u>all</u> of the events in Jesus life
 —point to a much greater reality which awaits God's faithful...
 reality of which Peter, James and John were privileged to receive
 only a glimpse.
- But our fidelity to God must be steadfast, and we must not just be "fair-weather" friends and disciples.
- As St. Paul tells us today: "Bear your share of hardship for the Gospel with the strength that comes from God."...being faithful in an unfaithful world, which will unavoidably involve hardship at times—whether that be persecution, or, more often in our case here and now in the U.S., perhaps disfavor, criticism, and challenge by those who reject God, or reject the Christ's teaching.
- But as our responsorial psalm reminds us today:

...the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him... To deliver them from death and preserve them **in spite of** famine.

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• ...<u>despite</u> inevitable challenges, not that there will be none. Thus it is essential that we know our faith well, for knowledge increases faith and assurance, while ignorance leads to doubt...and we must steel ourselves for oncoming challenges, and not flee at the test.

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• Our first reading alludes to the time Abram packed up all that he owned...left all that he knew...at the command of God...having faith and trust that God would do as He promised...going, as it says "...as the LORD directed him."

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• The Father today calls out: "This is my beloved Son; listen to Him"...calling us as He called Abram 4000 years ago. Will we respond as readily and faithfully?

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- There is no doubt of God's love for us, and His promises to us. Jesus died in agony upon the cross for our salvation, and He resurrected and ascended into Heaven, thereby showing us what is in store for His faithful.
- And He loves us so much that he becomes incarnate at every Mass

 —pouring our His love and grace in the sacrament of the
 Eucharist.
- And so...He gave all for us. Should we not give our all for Him?

Reading 1

Gn 12:1-4a

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.

<u>Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22</u> **Responsorial Psalm**

R. (22) 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.

R. 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.

R. 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.

2017

2 Tm 1:8b-10 Reading 2

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.

Mt 17:1-9 Gospel

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.

"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."