

- The Transfiguration we just read occurs right after Jesus confirms Peter’s insight that Jesus truly IS the Messiah and Son of God... and, yet, Jesus also tells the apostles that He would suffer and die. A seeming contradiction for them.
- And so, at the Transfiguration Jesus allows a few of them to witness firsthand a glimpse of His divine glory, to strengthen them in the confusion that would come at His Passion...
- ...as Peter affirms in his second letter: “...we were eyewitnesses of his majesty...we heard this voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.” (2 Peter 1:16-18)
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- Moses and Elijah appearing with Jesus, of course, represent the Law and the Prophets—God’s revelation—and affirming Jesus as both source and goal of that revelation and His being the very Word of God, as St. John’s writes: “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.*” (John 1:1, 14)
- And this glimpse of Jesus’ divinity would contrast, and yet complement, that Passover evening in the Garden of Gethsemane, when these same three apostles—Peter, James and John—would again witness Him...not in His glory, but in all His human angst and agony at His impending Passion—even more affirmation of our realization of Jesus as both truly God and truly Man.

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- But let’s look at our first reading—that of Abraham’s great faith in his willingness to offer even his beloved and only son Isaac as a human sacrifice.
  - We think: “How horrible! How could God ask such a thing?!”
  - But human sacrifice was not uncommon in Abraham’s time and place.

- But, of course, God abhors human sacrifice, and so at the last moment His angel stays Abraham’s hand. But it is Abraham’s willingness to give all for God—total faith, total obedience, total devotion—that redounds to Abraham’s everlasting glory...a totality of devotion to which ourselves are called.
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- Abraham is thus called “our father in faith”—the very seedling from which all monotheism comes—Jews, Christians and Muslims. These three thus are called the “Abrahamic” faiths—Jews and Christians through Abraham’s son Isaac, and the Muslims claiming heritage from Abraham’s son Ismael.
- We can see that God “sets up” this event, so to speak, as a contrast for the future...to demonstrate His own great love for Mankind, because Isaac would be foreshadow Jesus Himself.
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- God tells Abraham to offer Isaac as a holocaust as a proof of devotion, and yet stops Abraham at the last moment.
- Isaac would carry the wood upon which he was to be sacrificed up the hill, as Jesus would carry His the cross of His sacrifice up Calvary.
- God provides Abraham with a ram in place of Isaac, but Jesus IS the ram—the “lamb of God”—sacrifice for sin of the whole world.
- And so...though God the Father spares Isaac, He does not withhold His own Son upon a cross out of love for us and for our salvation...so much is God’s love for us.
- As we hear in the Exultet on Easter Vigil: “*O love, O charity beyond all telling, to ransom a slave, you gave away your Son...*”
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- This is why we heard St. Paul today write: *“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?”*
  - For, as St. John so famously assures us: *“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”* (John 3:16)
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- And so...this is the lens through which to look at our path through life, and the assurance of salvation for those faithful to God is the ever-present standard to which we look for courage, strength, and motivation in the trials and tribulations which inevitably come in every life.
- For Christ is our hope. He is why martyrs go to their deaths singing, why religious and missionaries give their lives in service of God, and why the faithful for 2000 years have striven to live ever more perfectly those two great commandments of loving God, loving neighbor...fortified by the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.
- ...because, whatever happens in this life, the faithful Christian sees beyond this life...like the sailor tirelessly battling stormy seas when he sees the calm harbor of his home.
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- When Jesus came, God fully revealed the totality of love He has for us...His desire for a deep and even individual, personal relationship with each of us.
- And so, when we feel weighed down with the burdens of life, remember Jesus' assurance at the Transfiguration in Matthew's version: *“Rise, and have no fear.”* (Matthew 17:7)... understanding, as St. Paul writes: *“...in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For...neither*

*death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come...nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

(Romans 8:37-39) No...nothing, and no one but ourselves, can separate us from God.

- We need only heed the Father’s command on the mountain: *“This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him.”*... for *“He guides me along the right path; He is true to His name. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me...”* (Psalm 23)
- Jesus gave all for us. Is it not, then, simply just and right that we be prepared to give all for Him?...and by doing so, join with our Savior in eternity.

**Reading 1 Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18**

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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**

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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**

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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**

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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.