

2nd Sunday of Lent A

First Reading Genesis 12:1-4a

The Lord said to Abram, "Leave your country, your family and your father's house, for the land I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name so famous that it will be used as a blessing. I will bless those who bless you: I will curse those who slight you. All the tribes of the earth shall bless themselves by you." So Abram went as the Lord told him.

Second Reading 2 Timothy 1:8-10

With me, bear the hardships for the sake of the Good News, relying on the power of God who has saved us and called us to be holy – not because of anything we ourselves have done but for his own purpose and by his own grace. This grace had already been granted to us, in Christ Jesus, before the beginning of time, but it has only been revealed by the Appearing of our saviour Christ Jesus. He abolished death, and he has proclaimed life and immortality through the Good News.

Gospel Matthew 17:1-9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone. There in their presence he was transfigured; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light. Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. "Lord," he said "it is wonderful for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and from the cloud there came a voice which said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him." When they heard this, the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear. But Jesus came up and touched them. "Stand up," he said "do not be afraid." And when they raised their eyes they saw no one but only Jesus. As they came down from the mountain Jesus gave them this order, "Tell no one about the vision until the Son of Man has risen from the dead."

Meditation

At this second station on our lenten journey we meet Jesus transfigured on the mountain.

This story serves as an icon for our contemplation, an opening through which we can see a divine and mysterious world simultaneously near and far. In Matthew's gospel, it is scarcely a week since Jesus predicted to his disciples his passion and their part in it. The three disciples who witness Jesus' glory on the mountain are thus strengthened to witness his agony in the garden.

Suddenly they see Jesus as he will become. Upon this human face which is threatened with the shadow of death, the dazzling light of Easter is already seen. Moses and Elijah surround him.

These two great witnesses of the old covenant attest by their presence the imminence of the last days, the appearance of the great awaited prophet. The Father is also present in the cloud, and just as at Jesus' baptism, his voice reveals for an instant the secret of Jesus of Nazareth: "This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him. Receive, in Him and in yourself, the narrow way of glory and suffering, of power and weakness, of death and resurrection!" It is time to come down onto the plain to continue the journey behind the servant. Soon the clouds of Golgotha will absorb the shining of this transfigured face. There will no longer be anything to see, apparently nothing more for which to hope. But the light which once shone was not misleading, the vision was not an illusion.

The dawning of Easter will show that life can conquer death.