



2nd Sunday of Lent



Date: Sunday, March 16, 2025 | **Season:** Lent | **Year:** C

First Reading: Genesis 15:5–12, 17–18

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 27:1, 7–9, 13–14 | **Response:** Psalm 27:1a

Second Reading: Philippians 3:17–4

Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 17:5

Gospel Reading: Luke 9:28b–36

Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House in the Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia.

There are moments when the veil is lifted, when the familiar world cracks open, and we glimpse something more—something beyond.

Abraham stood under the vast expanse of the night sky, looking up at stars beyond number. He was old. His wife, Sarah, was beyond childbearing years. And yet, God pointed to the heavens and made a promise: “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them. So shall your descendants be.”

It was an impossible promise. And yet Abraham believed. He placed his trust not in human possibility, but in the faithfulness of God. And because of that faith, God sealed a covenant—binding Himself to Abraham and his descendants forever.

Fast forward centuries, and we find Jesus leading Peter, James, and John up another mountain.

They are weary. They have followed Him this far, but He has begun to speak of suffering and the cross. And then, in an instant, everything changes.

His face is altered. His clothing, dazzling white. And standing with Him are Moses and Elijah, speaking with Him of His “exodus”—His own journey through suffering into glory.

And there it is again: the veil pulled back. A glimpse of the divine. A confirmation that the road to the cross is not the end of the story, but the path to glory.

Peter, overwhelmed, wants to capture the moment, to stay in this light forever. But a cloud overshadows them, and from within it, the voice of the Father declares: “This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him!”

And then—just as suddenly as it came—the vision fades. Jesus stands alone. And they begin the descent back down the mountain, back into the world.

What do we make of this?

The Transfiguration is not just a miracle; it is a revelation. A glimpse of who Jesus truly is—not only the suffering Son of Man, but the radiant Son of God.

But it is also a lesson. Because the road to glory always passes through the cross. Peter wanted to build tents, to remain in the brilliance of that moment—but the voice from the cloud did not say, “Look at Him.” It said, “Listen to Him.”

Listen when He speaks of love. Listen when He speaks of sacrifice. Listen when He calls us to take up our cross.

And that is the challenge, isn't it? We want the mountaintop, but we do not want the climb. We want resurrection, but we resist the dying to self that must come first.

Paul understood this when he wrote to the Philippians: “Our citizenship is in heaven.”

That is the truth, but it does not exempt us from the struggles of this world. To be citizens of heaven is not to retreat from the world, but to live differently within it—to stand firm, to walk in faith, to trust in a promise not yet fully seen.

That is why Psalm 27 sings of courage and trust: “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?”

And yet, the psalmist also cries out, “Do not hide Your face from me.”

Because faith does not mean we never struggle. It does not mean we always see clearly. Even Abraham, even Peter, even Paul—each had moments of doubt, of fear, of not understanding what God was doing.

But faith means trusting anyway.

Today, we remember St. Jean de Brébeuf, the Jesuit missionary who gave his life for the faith. On this very day in 1649, in what is now Canada, he endured terrible tortures at the hands of the Iroquois before dying a glorious martyr. The very recital of his suffering makes one shudder. And yet, even in the midst of it, he remained steadfast. He had glimpsed the promise and knew that the road to glory passed through the cross. His courage was not born of human strength, but of faith in the One who had already walked that road before him.

And so we ask ourselves:

- In what areas of my life is God asking me to trust Him more deeply?
- Do I try to cling to moments of comfort, like Peter on the mountain, instead of following Jesus down into the world's needs?
- When I struggle, do I remind myself that the road to glory always passes through the cross?

Lent is our own ascent of the mountain. We are called to see more clearly, to listen more deeply, and to follow more faithfully.

We do so knowing that the Lord is our light and our salvation. And because of that, we need not be afraid.

And so, as we look toward the path ahead, we also heed the voice from the cloud: “Listen to Him.” Today, the Church embarks on a new journey of listening—listening to the Holy Spirit, listening to one another, listening for the call to communion, participation, and mission. As Pope Francis has announced the implementation of the Synod—a process that will culminate in an Ecclesial Assembly in 2028—we pray that we, too, may be open to transformation. May we walk together in faith, trusting that the same God who led Abraham beneath the stars and Christ up the mountain will lead His Church today.

While we keep Pope Francis in our prayers, let us pray:

Lord of Light and Glory,
You revealed Your Son in radiance upon the mountain
and called us to listen to Him.
As we journey together as Your Church,
guide us in the path of communion, participation, and mission.
May we listen with hearts open to Your Spirit,

and may we be transformed, so that, in all we do,
we may reflect the loving and merciful light of Christ— a light that shines in the
darkness, a hope for the weary,
a balm for the wounded, and a peace for a world torn by war.
May His brilliance, undimmed by sorrow,
illumine the hearts of those who despair,
rekindle faith in those who have grown cold,
and lead all people into the warmth of His embrace.
Amen.

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