

### Mark 9:2-10

Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone by themselves. There in their presence he was transfigured: his clothes became dazzlingly white, whiter than any earthly bleacher could make them. Elijah appeared to them with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. Then Peter spoke to Jesus: 'Rabbi,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say; they were so frightened. And a cloud came, covering them in shadow; and there came a voice from the cloud, 'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.' Then suddenly, when they looked round, they saw no one with them any more but only Jesus.

As they came down from the mountain he warned them to tell no one what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They observed the warning faithfully, though among themselves they discussed what 'rising from the dead' could mean.

Jesus brings his disciples away from the noise of the market place and takes them up a mountain. We know that Jesus himself often went to the mountain top to pray. While they are on the mountain, Jesus is changed in a very dramatic way; he is transformed beyond all recognition. *His face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light.* Imagine the surprise of his companions and yet, Peter is still able to proclaim this great prayer, 'Lord it is wonderful for us to be here'. Maybe this brief glimpse of Jesus in all his glory is also meant for us today. Perhaps like the disciples, we too experience fear, doubt and even a lack of faith. Perhaps we too need to be encouraged and strengthened by Jesus, especially as we continue our journey through Lent. We too need know that our prayer, fasting and sharing with the poor is not an end in itself or that it is all done in vain. We are heading towards the resurrection and the new life of Easter, but we have a distance to go yet. But the experience of Jesus transformed offers each of us taste of what lies ahead of us. If we share in the suffering and passion of Jesus, we will also share in his resurrection

- Can I this week take myself away from the noise and business of life to a quiet place of prayer and reflection?

## Second Sunday of Lent

### Year B

### 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021



The readings for this second Sunday in Lent invite us to listen and to trust that God will lead us in ways that are life-giving.

Abraham learns that he can trust God with the life of his precious son, even though what he is asked to do seems contrary to all God's previous promises. His obedience and faithfulness are blessed by God. St. Paul reminds us that, since God gave up his only Son as his gift to us, we can be certain that he will not refuse us anything that we ask. God is on our side! We can trust him for our needs

In the Gospel, we hear Jesus ask for a different kind of trust from Peter, James and John. After seeing Jesus transfigured in all his glory on the mountain top, they are asked to listen and believe in him, but to wait for the right time to speak of all they have seen and heard.

This week we pray for the grace to trust and to listen ever more closely to the voice of the Lord, so that we too might walk in his presence.

#### Opening Prayer

*O God, who have commanded us to listen to your beloved Son, be pleased, we pray, to nourish us inwardly by your word, that, with spiritual sight made pure, we may rejoice to behold your glory.*

**Genesis 22:1-2,9-13,15-18**

God put Abraham to the test. 'Abraham, Abraham' he called. 'Here I am' he replied. 'Take your son,' God said 'your only child Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him as a burnt offering, on a mountain I will point out to you.'

When they arrived at the place God had pointed out to him, Abraham built an altar there, and arranged the wood. Then he bound his son Isaac and put him on the altar on top of the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand and seized the knife to kill his son.

But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven. 'Abraham, Abraham' he said. 'I am here' he replied. 'Do not raise your hand against the boy' the angel said. 'Do not harm him, for now I know you fear God. You have not refused me your son, your only son.' Then looking up, Abraham saw a ram caught by its horns in a bush. Abraham took the ram and offered it as a burnt-offering in place of his son.

The angel of the Lord called Abraham a second time from heaven. 'I swear by my own self – it is the Lord who speaks – because you have done this, because you have not refused me your son, your only son, I will shower blessings on you, I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore. Your descendants shall gain possession of the gates of their enemies. All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, as a reward for your obedience.'

God leads Abraham to a mountain by what must be the severest route ever - a father leading the son he loves in order to offer him as a sacrifice to the God he loves and is ready to obey, whatever the instructions. We can only guess at the terrible pain, as each step takes him closer to destroying his beloved child, an act which would appear to fly in the face of God's gift and his promise. Yet something assures Abraham, at the very depth of his being, that God is in control here and that all shall be well. Abraham was relinquishing all his past, present and future, his hopes and dreams to the great act of faith in God - Let your will be done! The Act of Faith. Can I this week pray, ponder on and make my own the Act of Faith?

**Psalm 115(116):10,15-19**

*I trusted, even when I said: 'I am sorely afflicted,'*

*O precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful.*

*Your servant, Lord, your servant am I; you have loosened my bonds.*

*A thanksgiving sacrifice I make; I will call on the Lord's name.*

*My vows to the Lord I will fulfil before all his people,*

*in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem.*

**Romans 8:31-34**

With God on our side who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us – he rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us.

In the Second Reading, echoing the story of Abraham and Isaac, St Paul challenges us to recall the enormity of God's love for the world in giving up his Son. With Jesus standing at the right hand of God pleading for us, we can have confidence in placing all our trust in him.

**Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!**

*From the bright cloud the Father's voice was heard:*

*'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.'*

**Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!**

*(Gospel overleaf)*

**Prayer over the Offerings**

*May this sacrifice, O Lord, we pray, cleanse us of our faults and sanctify your faithful in body and mind for the celebration of the paschal festivities.*

**Prayer after Communion**

*As we receive these glorious mysteries, we make thanksgiving to you, O Lord, for allowing us while still on earth to be partakers even now of the things of heaven.*