

**The Transfiguration
(2nd Sunday of Lent, Year B)**

Genesis 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18—The Sacrifice of Isaac

1. Father Abraham: Hebrew word *Ab-raham* = “Father of a multitude” (22:1)
2. Only Beloved Son: “take your only son Isaac, whom you love” (22:2)
3. Sacrifice: only beloved Son is laid “upon the wood” of sacrifice (22:9)
4. The Substitute: the “ram” caught by its “horns”; sacrificed instead of Isaac (22:13)
5. Universal Blessing: b/c of Abraham’s faith, “the nations” shall be blessed (22:18)
6. Mount Moriah: where does all this take place? “the land of Moriah” (22:1)

Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord *in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah*... (2 Chronicles 3:1)

Psalm 116—I Will Walk Before the Lord in the Land of the Living

1. Sacrifice: “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints” (v.15)
2. Suffering Servant: “I am your servant, the son of your handmaid” (v.16)
3. “I will offer the Lord *the sacrifice of thanksgiving* (Hebrew *todah*) (v.17)

Romans 8:31-34—Christ Jesus Who Died and Was Raised Intercedes for Us

1. Confidence in God: “If God is for us, who is against us?” (8:31)
2. Resurrection: “Is it Christ Jesus.... who intercedes for us” (8:34)

Mark 9:2-10—The Transfiguration

1. Mountain: Jesus takes “Peter, James, and John” up a “mountain” (9:2; cf. Mark 14:33)
2. Jesus is “Transfigured” (Greek *metemorphōthē*) (9:3)
 - a. Clothing: his “garments” became “glistening”
 - b. White: they were “intensely white” (not earthly white)
3. Moses and Elijah appear: they are “talking” to Jesus (9:4)
4. Peter’s Response:
 - a. Booths: “tents” or “tabernacles” (cf. Lev 23:39-43)
 - b. Why does he say this? Because he is “afraid” and “did not know what to say”
5. The Glory “Cloud”: comes and “overshadows” them (9:6; cf. Exodus 40)
6. Identity of Jesus: “this is my beloved Son, listen to him” (9:7)
 - a. Son of God: divine Son of God
 - b. New Isaac: beloved Son of Abraham! (cf. Gen 22:1-2)

The Living Tradition

Ephrem the Syrian: Jesus took the apostles up to the mountain for three reasons: first, to show them the glory of his divinity, then to declare himself Israel’s redeemer... and thirdly to prevent the apostles’ being scandalized at seeing him soon afterward enduring those human sufferings which he had freely accepted for our sake... He took them up

onto the mountain in order to show them his kingship before they witnessed his passion, to let them see his mighty power before they watched his death, to reveal his glory to them before they beheld his humiliation. (Ephrem the Syrian, *Sermon 16 on the Transfiguration* 1.3.4; trans. E. Barnecut).

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (2nd Sunday in Lent, Year B)

1. Put your self in the place of Peter, James, and John. What do you think it would have been like to experience the Transfiguration? Why did Jesus choose these three disciples in particular? (Hint: think of what they would witness in Gethsemane).

2. Why does God ask Abraham to sacrifice Isaac if he knows that the angel is going to save Isaac at the last minute? What is the meaning of this “test”? (Genesis 22:1)

- 3 What is the deeper meaning of the mystery of the Transfiguration? What does it reveal to us about the mystery of the Trinity? (cf. CCC 555)

For Further Study

1. Mary Healy. *The Gospel of Mark* (Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).
2. Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall, *Mark* (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament II; Downers Grove: IVP, 1998), 115-120.