

# Second Sunday of Lent:

**THE TRANSFIGURATION, February 28, 2021**

The Transfiguration experience for Jesus came at a very difficult time in his life, a time of uncertainty and fear of the future. He was headed for Jerusalem, where he sensed that the same fate awaited him as befell all the prophets — a violent death. Naturally he recoiled from such a fate. In order to reflect on it and pray about it, he climbed to the top of Mount Tabor.

We don't know exactly what happened on the mountain. But it seems that he had an intense experience of the presence of God. He heard those marvelous words: 'You are my beloved Son.' On Tabor Jesus felt himself comforted and affirmed. He knew that his Father was pleased with him, and would give him the strength to face a dark and threatening future. With God on his side, he could face anything.

At times life can become dark for all of us. There are a lot of voices which say to us: 'You're good, but only if you're successful, or if you're good, or if you're popular.' But there is a still small voice which whispers to us in our hearts: 'You are my beloved son/daughter.' This is the voice we need to pay attention to. We must recognize that we are God's beloved children, and try to live our lives by the light of this truth.

Two mountains dominate our readings today: Mt. Moriah, the place where Abraham's faith was tested (First Reading) and another mountain, which was most likely Mt. Tabor, where Jesus was transfigured. *These two mountains symbolize the ups and downs of every life.* We have those times when our faith is tested, moments when we think God is demanding too much of us, moments when it seems God is asking us to give up all the blessings he had previously given us.

And we have high moments, moments when God seems so close, when his presence fills us with wonder and awe, moments of blessing that we do not want to see come to an end. Often we have no control over where God might put us at different times in our lives: whether we find ourselves on Mt. Moriah facing great trials, or we find ourselves on Mt. Tabor in a state of ecstasy. But for most of us, most of the time we're somewhere in between, plugging along every day. Difficult times often seem to last forever but they seldom do. Abraham's time of trial ended when God said "hold off, you don't have to sacrifice your son. I just want to know you were willing to obey me." Sometimes that's all God wants from us is for us to say "Thy will be done." And the joyful moments in our lives end all too quickly.

The apostles wanted to stay on Mt. Tabor forever but our Lord said it was time to go back down. There was a lot of work and very hard times ahead of him. Not mentioned is a third very important mountain. It is foreshadowed in the story of Abraham and Isaac. God did not demand the human sacrifice of Isaac, but God's only son was to remain faithful to his mission even at the cost of his life on the hill of Calvary. Mt. Calvary also casts its shadow over the glory of Mt. Tabor. The gospel of Mark makes an obvious connection to between Jesus' passion and death and his transfiguration on Mt. Tabor.

Mark tells us specifically the transfiguration took place six days after Jesus' first prediction of his passion and death. And Mark ends Mt his narration of the transfiguration with Jesus telling his disciples; Peter, James and John not to tell anyone of the vision life until he had risen from the dead. The obvious linking of Jesus' death and resurrection with the transfiguration tells us that while Calvary reminds us all of Jesus' suffering and his cross, it is also his hour of glory that brings us salvation, hope and peace.

St. Paul asks us in today's second reading: "is it possible that he who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for the sake of us all will not grant us all things besides?"