

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT. READINGS (YEAR A): Gn 15:5-12,17-18, Phil 3:17-4 & Lk 9:28b-36

THEME: WHO IS YOUR MODEL OF FAITH?

If I ask you, "Who is your model of Catholic faith?" I think many of us would mention someone in his/her family, a priest, nun, or a saint, etc. In this Second Sunday of Lent's readings, the Church offers us a number of people who are models of our faith in God and his beloved Son, Jesus.

In the first reading, we see Abram as a model of faith. He is recognized as a Father of Faith by the three world religions, namely: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. He is the Father of Faith because he put his entire faith and trust in God's promises and God blessed him abundantly. He faithfully obeyed God's call to leave his native country to unknown foreign country. In today's reading, we read the solemn covenant God made with Abraham which became a foundation of God's relationship with the people of Israel. Because of his total faith in God, God blessed him and his descendants abundantly: "To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the Great River, the Euphrates." Fellow parishioners, I have never seen/heard anyone who put his/her faith in God and was disappointed by God. Never! Human beings will fail you but not the God who created you and loves you unconditionally.

St. Paul in the second reading is another model of faith, not only for the Christian community in Philippi, but for us all. We all know well how God called him, Saul, to become Paul. He then became one of the greatest apostles, an evangelist, and a missionary to the Gentiles. In the second reading, he encouraged the Christians in Philippi to firmly hold onto their faith in Jesus Christ alone. Then one day, they will share in Christ's glory: "Therefore my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, in this way stay firm in the Lord."

Remember, at the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest invites you to lift up your hearts. Paul did the same thing we read today in his letter to the Philippians. He invited the Christians in Philippi and all of us who are "occupied with earthly things," rather to look up to heaven, then God will give us a new form to "our lowly body."

In today's Gospel reading of St. Luke, we have these models of faith: Peter, James, John, Elijah, Moses, and Jesus, who is the greatest model of our Christian faith. Luke gives us his version of the Transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor. Jesus took Peter, John, and James to pray on Mount Tabor where they experienced a glimpse of his glory. It was there that he was transfigured, and they heard the voice saying to them: "This is my (beloved) chosen Son; listen to him." Peter, who was full of joy and peace, wanted to build tents so that they would live there forever. Moses, the great lawgiver, and Elijah, the greatest of the prophets, also witnessed Jesus' transfiguration. These two great Old Testament figures (Moses and Elijah) coming there meant that the Law and the prophecy have found their fulfillment in Jesus. This explains why they must now listen to Jesus, the greatest prophet and lawgiver.

Although Peter, John, and James are imperfect as they are, they are models of faith for us all. They preached the Gospel of Christ and died for Jesus and his Gospel. Jesus is our best and an excellent model of faith in God. This explains why we must never allow anyone to ruin our precious faith in God and his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the best model for us to look up to who will never let us down.

The Transfiguration provides a heavenly confirmation to Jesus that he is on the right path to fulfill his mission here on earth which will ultimately lead him to glory. The Transfiguration also benefits the apostles, namely, it prepared them for the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah. They also experienced a glimpse of Jesus' glory, which one day they will experience its fullness in heaven.

What then is the significance of the Transfiguration to us also? If we listen to Jesus and follow him faithfully, we will also share his glory in heaven with him. Let us also remember that "No Cross, No Crown." We must also share in Jesus's passion and death so that we will share in his glory.

During this Lenten Season, let us intensify our fasting, prayers, and almsgiving, then by the grace of God, we will share in Jesus' glory in heaven with him. May our Holy Mother Mary and her beloved husband, St. Joseph, continue to intercede for us so that one day, we shall also share in the glory of their beloved Son, Jesus Christ.