

2nd Sunday of Lent

First reading

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

The sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith

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.'

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 115(116):10,15-19

I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

I trusted, even when I said:
'I am sorely afflicted,'
O precious in the eyes of the Lord
is the death of his faithful.

I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

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.

I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

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.

I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

Second reading *Romans 8:31-34*

God did not spare his own Son

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.

Gospel Acclamation *Matthew 17:5*

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!
From the shining cloud the Father's voice is heard:
this is my beloved Son, hear him.
Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel

Mark 9:2-10

This is my Son, the Beloved

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.



THIS SUNDAY'S REFLECTION

THE TRANSFIGURATION

On the 2nd Sunday of Lent the Gospel reading proclaims the story of **Jesus' Transfiguration**, which occurs after the significant events of Chapter 8, where we have Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah, and Jesus' prediction about his passion.

The appearance of Elijah and Moses shows the importance of these two figures in the history of Israel. **Moses** led the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and received the Ten Commandments. Moses represents **the Law that guides the lives** of the Jewish people. **Elijah** is remembered as one of the most important **prophets of Israel** who helped the Israelites **stay faithful to God**. The appearance of these figures from Israel's history with Jesus signifies **Jesus' continuity with the Law and with the prophets** and that **Jesus is the fulfillment** of all that was promised to the people of Israel.

The voice from heaven recalls the voice that was heard at Jesus' baptism – 'This is my Son, the Beloved'.

In this episode we see an anticipation of the glory of Jesus' Resurrection. However, Jesus instructs the disciples to keep secret what they have seen until after the Son of Man has risen from the dead. The disciples cannot possibly understand Jesus' Transfiguration until they also witness his passion and death.

We hear the story of Jesus' Transfiguration early in Lent, but we have the benefit of hindsight. In our hearing of it, we anticipate Jesus' Resurrection, even as we prepare to remember Jesus' passion and death.

The First Reading is also puzzling – why would God want Abraham to sacrifice his son? The story is probably connected to the abandonment of human sacrifice. And it definitely connects with the 2nd Reading from Romans, stating that 'God did not spare his own Son'.

Read more detail on all points in the gospel passage at Fr John McKinnon's site

<http://johnmckinnon.org/index.php/mark9v2-13>