



Matthew 17:1-9

1 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone. **2** There in their presence he was transfigured; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light. **3** Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. **4** Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Lord,' he said, 'it is wonderful for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' **5** He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and from the cloud there came a voice which said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.' **6** When they heard this, the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear. **7** But Jesus came up and touched them. 'Stand up,' he said, 'do not be afraid.' **8** And when they raised their eyes they saw no one but only Jesus. **9** As they came down from the mountain Jesus gave them this order. 'Tell no one about the vision until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.'

Other readings: Genesis 12:1-4 Psalm 32 (33) 2 Timothy 1:8-10

On the second Sunday of Lent the gospel of the Transfiguration is always read, from one or other of the three synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke). This year it is Matthew's account which is read. What is it that makes this story appropriate at this time?

The story recounts an experience of Jesus which three disciples shared, but which they are told must remain secret until after he has risen from the dead. The experience astonishes the disciples, for they see Jesus transformed, transfigured, as they have never seen him before.

To understand the meaning of this event we should remember that in the gospel story Jesus has just told the disciples that he foresees his own passion and death. They react with horror. The transfiguration serves to put their fear in a broader context. Going to his death, Jesus nevertheless trusts that the Father will raise him from the dead. The experience of the transfiguration, the details of which are quite difficult to grasp, gives these three chosen disciples a glimpse of something beyond suffering and death.

The reading from the book of Genesis may seem to have little connection, but here too we are aware of a journey, the journey of Abraham into the unknown as he trusts God to be with him. The journey of Jesus to the cross is similar. If we have trust in God we too can 'bear the hardships for the sake of the Good News', as the second reading asks.

How might the story of the transfiguration gives us hope?

Have I ever experienced anything like transfiguration in my own life?

We pray that we may persevere in trust, like Jesus and Abraham.

We pray for a broader vision, that we may be more aware of the things of God, and of God's goodness.