

Homily 2nd Sunday of Lent Cycle B: 2015: Gen 22: 1-2, 9, 10-13, 15-18; Ps. 116; Rom
8:31-34; Mk. 9: 2-10

“The Transfiguration as a signpost pointing to Heaven”

1. **Jesus’ Transfiguration today in the Gospel reminds us of the reality of Heaven.** This event is a powerful reminder that we need to keep our eyes fixed on Heavenly realities which our Catholic Faith points to, and not on the passing things of this world: *the false glitz and glamour of sin as well as the historical events of our time that upset us and possibly cause us to lose heart or faith at times, e.g. today with the evil group ISIS kidnapping and murdering Christians simply for being Christians in the Middle East - how we need to pray for them and encourage our political leaders to do all they can to fight such hatred and evil.* We all need to call to mind frequently what Jesus tells us elsewhere in the Gospel: that if we want to enter into His Kingdom which is not of this world, we have to pick up our Cross daily and follow His Way in our earthly life which is often a valley of tears, but with the assurance that following Him in fidelity of heart and mind and life will lead to a happiness and a glory beyond our imagining in Heaven. **This is what the mysterious event of the Transfiguration of Jesus should show us!** We are not believing in vain concerning the things of God and trying to live by His teachings as manifested through the Catholic Church, which speaks in His name to our weary world and often to our own weary hearts. The reality is truly this, as St. Paul says elsewhere: *“Eye has not seen ear has not heard, nor has it dawned on the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Corth 2:9) = It’s worth it!*
2. **“If God is for us who can be against us?”** St. Paul says in such a beautiful way on the 2nd reading today: **We need to have spiritual confidence in the Lord. Do we? This is different than spiritual pride,** which falsely tells us that we alone are accomplishing whatever good is happening in our lives - a danger throughout life, but especially when we are young, vibrant, and healthy - as epitomized in the old Frank Sinatra song- *“I did it my way”*. **Spiritual confidence in the Lord is different - it is tied into the supernatural virtue of Hope, which is the**

*confidence we have in the Lord, placed in us by the Holy Spirit in our Baptism that God is the victor over sin, death, and the powers of darkness through the mystery of Christ's Cross and Resurrection, and now He wants to win that victory in each of our individual lives, by enabling us to live a new life in harmony with the teachings of God and His Church, through the power or grace given to our souls through all of the 7 Sacraments, which is the narrow path that leads to salvation. **Spiritual confidence in the Lord, the fruit of which is humility and joy since everything doesn't depend on us, enables us to overcome any obstacle in our lives, because "if God is for us who can be against us?" Truly we can always get a new start with God, especially through prayer and the gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, but if only we take advantage of it. Again this is what Lent is all about. The core message of Lent is: no sin or life-obstacle is stronger than His grace, despite what we think! We may have to suffer for a time in this life, but it leads eventually to the Resurrection, if we offer and unite our life with Jesus on a daily basis. The Transfiguration is meant to remind both the three chosen Apostles and us today of that reality. **Do we fully believe this? If not,** we are living our lives to some degree in fear, and doubt, and spiritual darkness. **How dreadful and burdensome that can be!** If on the other hand, we ask the Lord to reveal the truth of His love to our hearts, **our lives will be changed forevermore** - if we are willing to trust Him in love. He knows how hard it is to believe at times in the truth of His promises revealed through our Catholic Faith, when we are suffering greatly, which is why we are called to pray for this gift of **Spiritual Confidence**, to realize fully: **Jesus is the Victor** over satan, sin and death. And so are we, if we let the Holy Spirit transform us more and more into the image of Jesus. As St. Peter so beautifully puts it in his first letter chapter one, "There is a cause for rejoicing here. You may for a time have to suffer the distress of many trials: but this is so that your faith, which is more precious than the passing splendor of fire-tried gold, may by its genuineness lead to praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ appears. Although you have never seen Him, you love Him, and without seeing now believe in Him, and rejoice with inexpressible***

joy touched with glory because you are achieving faith's goal, your salvation (1 Pet 1: 6-8).

3. **“This is my beloved Son, listen to Him.”** By living a life of **spiritual confidence** and **obedience** to the Lord and the Church we come to see that **the Lord's way is the better way**: because even through we may have to suffer for a time it will lead to eternal happiness. To quote St. Peter again who witnessed firsthand the miraculous Transfiguration, as he would reflect upon later in his life: to help both he as the first Pope and the Church at large to stay focused on the Lord in the midst of persecution and trial, in which there must have been a strong temptation to give up or give in, *“it was not by way of cleverly concocted myths that we taught you about the coming in power of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we were eyewitnesses of His sovereign majesty. He received glory and praise from God the Father when that unique declaration came to Him out of the majestic splendor: ‘This is my beloved Son, on whom my favor rests.’ We ourselves heard this said from Heaven while we were on the holy mountain. Besides, we possess the prophetic message as something altogether reliable. Keep your attention fixed on it, as you would on a lamp shining in a dark place until the first streaks of dawn appear and the morning star rises in your hearts (2 Pet 1: 16-19).* May the Lord help us to be obedient to all of His teachings (*made known to us through our Catholic faith*) in love, not just some of them; to truly desire His holiness in our lives, so as to experience, even now in our souls, **a spiritual taste** of the eternal life of glory prefigured in the Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May we, with God's help, generously embrace our crosses in life and pray for others in a spirit of love, trusting in His Divine Mercy. Finally may we desire this life of ultimate Truth, Beauty and Love in God more than anything this passing world can offer us. ***Lord, help us to keep our eyes on You amidst the challenges and temptations of earthly life!*** Blessed Mother Mary, and all of the saints and good angels, pray for us to stay spiritually focused in this distracting world. For truly *“eye has not seen, ear has not heard, not has it dawned on the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Corth 2: 9).* God bless you.