

Homily for the Second Sunday of Lent
March 8, 2020
By Nick Thompson

The first readings for this year's Sundays of Lent focus on Old Testament figures. You might remember that last Sunday the reading focused on Adam and Eve. This Sunday the figure from the Old Testament is Abram. Next Sunday it will be Moses, then David, the week after that Ezekiel and finally, on Passion Sunday, the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. The message implied here is that Jesus Christ incorporates in Himself the entirety of God's dealings with His people. Jesus is the New Adam, who does not turn from God as the first Adam did. He is the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham. He is the Successor to Moses. He is the Son of David. He imparts the Spirit upon men as Ezekiel did in the vision of the Valley of Dried Bones. And He is the one who suffers and dies for us as the Suffering Servant in Isaiah.

We, the people of God, gather here in this place as the fulfillment of the covenant God made with Abram. We are the descendants, the great nation of believers who number like the stars, the faithful who pass on the promised blessings of Abram to all the communities of the earth. We continue like Abram to accept or reject the calling from God that began for each of us at the baptismal font at the womb of the church at our own Baptism. The call, reinforced by our Confirmation, is

to make an extreme act of trust, to take a leap of faith, the call to stand up to the world around us and live “a holy life, not according to our works but according to God’s own design.”

We, like Abram, are not asked to answer this call without the help of blessings and the hope of greater things to come. We bear our hardships, and there are hardships, with strength that comes from God, with the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began. We live in the hope “of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, through Jesus the living Word of God.

We gather in this place just as Jesus gathered Peter, James and John and led them up a high mountain, we gather here on the mountain of the Lord with the tabernacle of God at its pinnacle. And just as Jesus was transfigured before them, he allows us to witness and participate again in the transfiguration. We watch the Book of the Gospels process from the Baptismal font, the womb of mother church, past the Paschal candle, the pillar of fire that led our forefathers through the dessert, to be enthroned on our altar as the Word of God, the tablets of Mount Sinai, the voice of the prophet, the word made flesh who dwells among us. We hear from this ambo the conversation between Moses, the law, Elijah, the prophets, and Jesus, the true author and inspiration of all that is said in scripture. Our hearts burn

within us just as Moses' heart was consumed before the burning bush just as the hearts of Jesus' disciples burned on the road to Emmaus. We open the doors to the tents of our hearts and pray that the Holy Spirit will dwell within us. And we take heed of the voice of the Father from heaven who says, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." Because we have heard, because our hearts believe, because we have faith, because we listen, we throw ourselves, our good and our bad onto the offertory gifts. The bread and the wine the work of human hands absorb all of our hardships, all of our dreams, all of our sins, all of our hopes as they process forward. Forward through a sea of souls like a wall of water to the right and a wall of water to the left all souls saved by the water of Baptism. We are handed over to the priest to become the sacrifice, the sacrificial lambs. We prostrate ourselves before God as we kneel in awe of what is occurring before our eyes in this place. And as the priest lowers his hands over the gifts and asks the Holy Spirit to come down on us like the dew fall to make us a worthy sacrifice Jesus touches each one of us saying, "Rise and do not be afraid." The bell rings the first time and Jesus transfigures each of us into the communion of living saints as the Holy Spirit burns our sins away in a holocaust offering. The bell rings the second time and Christ exchanges himself with us, he takes our place in the bread, changing its very substance into himself, as the

substance of our being, our souls, join with the souls in heaven to become the communion of saints. The bell rings the third time and Christ's life force the very blood that he shed for us is exchanged with our life force as we become the body of Christ. And when we the disciples raise our eyes, we see no one else but Jesus alone for we are now one flesh one body of Christ our transfiguration his transubstantiation is complete. The heavenly banquet table is set as we come forward to eat and drink of our God. Only one task remains and that is for us to become a blessing to all of the communities of the earth. The Son of Man has been raised from the dead now we must tell the vision to everyone. Go out now to live the gospel.