



YEAR A – MARCH 8, 2020

The first reading today (Genesis 12:1-4) reminds us of the call of Abraham to be the Father of a great nation of believers. He accepted his call from God and fulfilled his mission. Now, it's our job to fulfill our call.

The second reading (2 Timothy 1:8-10) reminds us of our call, a call to holiness. During Lent, we reflect on how we need to change our lives in order to fulfill that part of our mission

The Gospel today (Matthew 17:1-9) speaks to us about the Transfiguration of Jesus before Peter, James and John. The face of Jesus became as radiant as the sun. It is that part of the scene to which I would like to draw your attention today - that mysterious light that shone from the face of Jesus and the radiance of his garments. What was that all about? We can't explain it scientifically but there are other instances of that phenomenon that have been recorded in time.

In the book of Exodus, when Moses came down from the mountain after talking with God, the people noticed how radiant the skin of his face had become and they were afraid to come near him. Likewise, the spiritual director of St. Elizabeth of Hungary wrote in a letter that when Elizabeth came from prayer, people often saw "...her face shining marvelously and light coming from her eyes like the rays of the sun."

Some skeptics tell us that this is just part of the literary form of hagiography and would have us believe that this manifestation of light never really happened but was only a literary contrivance to make the point of the author. I don't know what you believe but let me share with you an incident that had nothing to do with hagiography or literary forms of any kind.

Some years ago, the BBC sent Malcolm Muggeridge to India to do a documentary on Mother Teresa. The BBC wanted to televise her and her sisters picking up the dying on the streets in the slums of Calcutta and taking them to a shelter run by the nuns. The shelter to which they brought the sick was once a temple to the Hindu goddess Kali. It is dimly lit by tiny windows high up in the walls of the building near the ceiling.

The television crew had not anticipated the poor lighting inside the building and had not brought portable lights with them. They concluded it was useless to try to film the sisters working with the dying inside the building. But someone suggested they do it anyway. Perhaps some of the footage could be used.

To everyone's surprise the footage filmed inside the shelter turned out to be spectacular. The whole interior was bathed in a warm mysterious light. Technically speaking, the results were impossible to explain. Had there been a camera crew at the Transfiguration scene, we might also have documented proof of that mysterious light as well.

Jesus challenges all of us today, to be that kind of light in our world. He says let your light shine for all to see. The holy season of Lent is the time for all of us to reform, reshape, refashion our lives so that mysterious light can be seen. For a few moments in silence, reflect on how you will do that this year, and then, do it.