

**“This is my beloved Son, in whom is all my delight.
Listen to him.” [Matthew 17:5]**

A. GENESIS 22:1-2,9,10-13,15-18-- The Context: This book covers events in prehistory and from 1800 B.C. to 1300 B.C. It was written to make the point that God created everything and that it was good, yet humans broke faith with God and brought evil into the world. [RG 32] **Today’s text** tells of God putting Abraham to the test: to prove the firmness of Abraham’s faith in God’s promise that through Isaac all the nations of the earth would find blessing. [TCB, 26]

B. PSALM 116:10,15-19 --The Context. A thanksgiving in which the psalmist responds to divine rescue from mortal danger [TCB, 727]

C. ROMANS 8:31-34---The Context: Paul wrote this between 56-58 A.D. to recount how God’s hatred for sin is matched only by the abundant love he displayed in giving us Christ. **Today’s portion** touts **the all-conquering power of God’s love** over every obstacle to Christian’s salvation and every threat to separate them from God. That power manifested itself fully when God’s own son was delivered up to death for their salvation. Through him Christians can overcome all their afflictions and trials. [TCB, 241]

D. MARK 9:2-10--The Context: Mark was a Gentile disciple of Peter writing for Gentiles circa 65-70 A.D. This is the shortest gospel, filled with more vivid detail than the other Synoptics. He focuses more on what Jesus did than what he said. [RG 364] **Today’s pericope** report’s Jesus’ Transfiguration just after his first prediction of his passion and death and his instruction to the disciples on the doctrine of the cross. The Transfiguration counterbalances this by **affording the disciples insight into Jesus’ divine glory**. Moses & Elijah represented the Law & the prophets in the OT. Now they are witnesses to the fulfillment of the Law and the prophets taking place in the person of Jesus. In the OT the cloud covering the meeting tent signified God’s presence. [TCB, 81]

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME PERSONALLY TODAY?

The strange experience of the Transfiguration described in the Gospel took place very soon after Jesus had been recognized by his disciples as the Messiah. This acknowledgment on their part was a wonderful breakthrough and discovery in their relation with their Teacher and Master. This had been immediately followed by Jesus telling them he would be rejected by their political and religious leaders and made to suffer and die before rising on the third day. **It is clear that this came as a terrible shock to the disciples.** Their vision of the Messiah was of a glorious, victorious king defeating all the enemies of Israel.

The idea that Messiah would be rejected, made to suffer and die at the hands of his own people was simply unthinkable. It was a total contradiction of the whole concept of the Messiah as Savior King. Now it seems that this special experience is being given **to balance out the picture**. Only a small inner circle is chosen for the experience. It seems that these three disciples, including the leader Peter, are given a glimpse of the “real” Jesus to help them through the dark days ahead.

It is a scene full of biblical images. The disciples are brought by Jesus up a solitary mountain. Tradition identifies the mountain as Tabor but it does not really matter. **Mountains are traditionally places where God is to be found.** Moses delivered God’s Law from the summit of Mount Sinai. Jesus, the new Moses, delivered the New Law (the Sermon on the Mount) from a mountain. There was also Mount Carmel linked with the prophet Elijah and the mountain in today’s First Reading where Abraham took his son Isaac to be sacrificed.

TRANSFIGURATION: OUR CALL TO LISTEN TO JESUS

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Jesus is transformed with the dazzling light of God's glory. We remember how Moses on Mount Sinai could not look on the face of God. With Jesus appear Moses and Elijah. Moses represents the Law and Elijah the prophets. Together they represent the whole tradition of God's people. **In being seen talking with Jesus, it is understood that they are endorsing fully all that Jesus says and does as being a continuation of the tradition they represent.**

We now have Peter's impetuous reaction. He is totally overcome by what he realizes is a uniquely privileged experience, "Lord, it is wonderful for us to be here!" He suggests that three shrines be set up in honor of Jesus, Moses and Elijah to commemorate the vision. The Gospel comments that he did not know what he was talking about. **There never would be a shrine to Jesus except in the hearts of his followers.** [Frank Doyle, SJ]

Mark tells us that the garments of Jesus became radiant. The word he uses, *stilbein*, is the word used for the glistening gleam of burnished gold or brass or the golden glare of sunlight. The transfiguration has **a double significance** for Jesus. (1) It did something very precious for Jesus. On the mountain top **he received a double approval of his decision to go to Jerusalem to face and accept the cross.** When the greatest of the law givers, Moses, and the greatest of the prophets, Elijah met with Jesus, it meant that **they saw in Jesus the consummation of all that they had dreamed of in the past.** They saw in him what all history had dreamed of, hoped for and looked forward to. (2) God spoke to Jesus. **Jesus did not consult his own wishes.** He asked God, "What will you have me to do?" And **God said, "You are acting as my own beloved Son should act and must act. Go on!"**

And it did something precious for the disciples. Jesus' prediction of his passion seemed to them the complete negation of all they understood of the Messiah. They were bewildered, baffled and uncomprehending. **What they saw on the mountain would give them something they could hold on to later, a view of the glory of Christ.** (Barclay, Gospel of Mark, 210,211]

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

How will I show Jesus my gratitude for his decision to expiate my sins on the cross?

During Lent how will I become more aware of God's presence in people and in events in my life?

During this season how will I make a habit to discern God's will for me in my life's big decisions?

How will I listen to Jesus during Lent? Is daily Scripture reading & prayer part of my plan?

[Sources: Scripture readings- *The Catholic Bible, NAB translation, Home Study Edition, (TCB), and its Reading Guide (RG); The New Jerome Biblical Commentary, (NJBC) 1990 edition; J.L.McKenzie, SJ, Dictionary of the Bible (DB); Wm Barclay, The Daily Bible Study Series, Gospel of Mark [DSBS]; Sunday Scripture Reflections by Frank Doyle, SJ at www.sacredspace.ie/livingspace; Editor: Michael Hosemann].*