

HOMILY: Second Sunday of Lent A: March 1, 2026

Gen. 12. 1-4; Ps. 33; 2 Tim. 1. 8b-10; St. Matthew 17. 1-9

“The Transfiguration... Rise, and do not be afraid!”

1. On 4th Sunday of Ord. Time – 2 wks. ago, Feb. 3rd., we meditated on the figure – the “veiled face of Christ” in the Beatitudes in H. Gospel of St. Matthew:

“At that time, when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up the mountain, & after He sat down, His disciples came to Him, & He began to teach them...” (St. Matthew 5. 1)

It was in that homily, as preparation for Season of Lent, I suggested that Gospel was asking us to consider ***valleys & mountains*** in our lives: not just ***valleys & mountains*** of sin, but also ***valleys & mountains of grace – invitations that Lord gives to us of His loving Mercy!***

2. Today’s H. Gospel, St. Matthew 17, once again Jesus ascends Mountain:

Holy Father Benedict points out that there are so many mountains for Jesus in His life: “Once again we need to keep together in our minds the various mountains of Jesus’ life; the mountain of the temptation; the mountain of His great preaching (Beatitudes); the mountain of His prayer; the mountain of His Transfiguration; the mountain of His agony; the mountain of the Cross; and finally, the mountain of the Risen Lord, where He declares – in total anti-thesis to the offer of world dominion through the devil’s power: “All power in Heaven and on earth is given to Me” (Mt. 28.18).” (*Jesus of Nazareth, p. 308*)

These are the “mountains” in Jesus’ life that we know about. Could it be that there were hundreds & even thousands of mountains – and deserts – that we do not know? Is it not the same w/ you & me? We look @ one another – so often we think “If only I was like that person; if only I had their gifts or his/her life – everything would be just great!?” Really? Can you really guess the mountains & valleys & deserts that your neighbour lives?

3. ***“At that time, Jesus took Peter, James & John... & led them up a high mountain...” (St. Matthew 17. 1) As we always say, for the Jewish person @ time of Christ, I think also today, the image of ‘mountain’ is most powerful – inescapable, as Pope Benedict goes on to remind us:***

“In the background [of the scene of the mount] we also catch sight of Sinai, Horeb, Moriah – the mountains of Old Testament revelation. They are all at one & the same time mountains of passion and of Revelation, & they also refer in turn to the Temple Mount, where Revelation becomes liturgy.” (*Jesus of Nazareth, pgs. 308-309*)

You may – or may not – think, OK, that’s interesting, but, what has that to do with me? Everything! ***Watch!***

If we admit we are children of God by adoption – Baptism! If we admit we are led more & more deeply into Mystery of Christ’s Myst. Body by way of Eucharist (there is Pope Benedict’s talk about ‘passion & revelation’), then we must also admit that our lives – there is the talk about the mountains, peaks, valleys, the pain and also the joy – connecting with prayer, both private, and with our brothers and sisters @ the Altar of God. What do we call that kind of prayer? Liturgy! And what we see Jesus doing in this Gospel is taking the Apostles from their ‘little view’ of what they thought Messiah was supposed to be: political ruler, Bread King, Fixer, (don’t we have that view, at least now & then?!) to a far greater view – a view that could only be glimpsed on a mountain:

Yes! Jesus would suffer & die for us on the Cross – the Cross is Price for our salvation – but after Cross! – there is Jesus beyond which they couldn’t even imagine – He had been with them all along, hiding His real self, but with them. As Archbp. Sheen points out: “The wonder [of Transfig.] was not this momentary radiance about Him; it was rather that at all other times it was repressed.” (Life of Christ, Sheen, pg. 162)

4. Apostles waken to see Jesus in His radiance – there is “cloud,” like *shekinah* which rested over Ark of Covenant... ***“This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well-pleased!”***

(St. Matthew 17. 5) Our Tabernacles, too, are to be veiled... Christ is present there; Pope Benedict reminds us in his Apost. Exhortation 'Sac. Caritatis' not only Christ, but also His Father, & His Spirit, Holy Spirit..., even Our Lady!"

5. As we climb mountain of Altar of God... gaze @ Tabernacle, veiled presence of God of Hosts, as we look from mountain of Cross to mount of Transfig. to mount of Resurrection... can we offer our own mountains & valleys of sin & temptation, fear & sorrows, joys & sufferings, in short, our lives? ***If we do, it is then that H. Mass shall become, truly, encounter with Risen Christ! And if we have that encounter w/ Christ, then we, too, shall hear the voice of Jesus saying to us: "Rise, and do not be afraid!"***

(St. Matthew 17. 7)

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