



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**Second Sunday of Lent
March 16th 2025**

Theme: "Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray."

Gathering Prayer

All: O God, who have commanded us to listen to your beloved Son, be pleased, we pray, to nourish us inwardly by your word, that, with spiritual sight made pure, we may rejoice to behold your glory. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Luke 9:28-36

²⁸Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹And as he was praying, the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white. ³⁰And behold, two men talked with him, Moses and Elijah, ³¹ who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³²Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, and when they wakened they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said. ³⁴As he said this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" ³⁶And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silence and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

Gospel Focus

In the biblical imagination, mountains are often a privileged place of encounter with God. Their heights are somewhere between heaven and earth, so they are seen as an in-between place where the usual boundaries between the natural and the supernatural are thinner. Peter, John and James see some extraordinary things in their mountaintop experience. They see Moses and Elijah—two other men who met God on a mountain—and might come to understand Jesus as part of their prophetic lineage. What they do not yet understand is that Jesus both fulfils and transcends what God has done in the past. They no longer need to ascend the mountain, because Jesus himself is a place of encounter with God. In him, God has become newly accessible, dwelling among us in an unprecedented way.

Gospel Reflection

A missionary working in a country where many forms of violence are a part of the fabric of everyday life remarked that she was very conscious that she could choose whether to stay or to leave. This is a choice that the people to whom she has dedicated her life do not have. Some friends and family members do not understand how she could choose to put her own life in danger for the sake of the people she has come to love as her own.

Such a choice faces Jesus in today's gospel. In Luke's version of this story which we hear on the Second Sunday of Lent, albeit from different gospels each year, there are unique details that point to an earlier source that tells us more clearly what really happened at the transfiguration.

This episode is set at an important turning point in the gospel. Jesus has been teaching, preaching, healing, exorcising demons, and gathering disciples as he traverses the Galilee. Soon he will "set his face to go to Jerusalem." Something happens on the mountaintop that helps Jesus to know the next step in his mission. Luke alone notes that when Jesus goes up the mountain with Peter, James and John, his purpose is to pray.

A clue to the nature of Jesus' prayer comes in the context of the conversation between Jesus, Moses and Elijah. They "spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem." Jesus is wrestling with the decision whether he should leave Galilee and direct his efforts toward Jerusalem, the centre of religious and political power. There is still much to do in Galilee, and he could continue to minister there, but he struggles to know whether his efforts could bring about greater systemic change if he were to go to Jerusalem.

However, Jesus is no fool. The handwriting is on the wall. Opposition to him is already mounting, and it would only intensify if he were to go to Jerusalem. As at every major turning point in the gospel, Jesus enters into deep communion with God as he discerns what to do.

During this, intense prayer of discernment, Jesus is given sure signs that God guides him in his choice. A cloud, the sign of God's presence with the Israelites as they went forth from Egypt, overshadows him, as at his baptism. Two heavenly messengers embody the divine presence, giving Jesus strength as he leans on God's word in the law and the prophets. The heavenly voice reassures both him and his disciples of Jesus' chosen status and the rightness of his choice. Thus assured of God's love and direction, Jesus turns his transfigured face toward Jerusalem. Placing his own life in danger, Jesus makes a deliberate, prophetic choice to continue to "proclaim liberty to captives" (4:18), as he had declared in his hometown synagogue. His death is not an inevitable fate but a choice for freeing love.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18

⁵And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

⁶And he believed the LORD; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness. ⁷And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess." ⁸But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" ⁹He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a she-goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."

¹⁰And he brought him all these, cut them in two, and laid each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. ¹¹And when birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. ¹²As

the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram; and lo, a dread and great darkness fell upon him.... ¹⁷When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.

Responsorial Reading — Ps 27:1, 7-8, 8-9, 13-14

R: *The Lord is my light and my salvation. (R)*

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear?
The Lord is my life's refuge; of whom should I be afraid? **(R)**

Hear, O Lord, the sound of my call; have pity on me, and answer me.
Of you my heart speaks; you my glance seeks. **(R)**

Your presence, O Lord, I seek. Hide not your face from me; do not in anger repel your servant. You are my helper: cast me not off. **(R)**

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the Lord in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord with courage; be stouthearted, and wait for the Lord. **(R)**

Second Reading — Philippians 3:17-4:1

¹⁷Brethren, join in imitating me, and mark those who so live as you have an example in us. ¹⁸For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself.

^{4:1}Therefore, my brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

516. Christ's whole earthly life - his words and deeds, his silences and sufferings, indeed his manner of being and speaking - is *Revelation* of the Father. Jesus can say: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father", and the Father can say: "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" (*Jn 14:9; Lk 9:35; cf. Mt 17:5; Mk 9:7 ("my beloved Son").*) Because our Lord became man in order to do his Father's will, even the least characteristics of his mysteries manifest "God's love. . . among us". (*1 Jn 4:9*)

556. On the threshold of the public life: the baptism; on the threshold of the Passover: the Transfiguration. Jesus' baptism proclaimed "the mystery of the first regeneration", namely, our Baptism; the Transfiguration "is the sacrament of the second regeneration": our own Resurrection.(St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh III, 45, 4, ad 2*) From now on we share in the Lord's Resurrection through the Spirit who acts in the sacraments of the Body of Christ. The Transfiguration gives us a foretaste of Christ's glorious coming, when he "will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body."(*Phil 3:21*) But it also recalls that "it is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God":(*Acts 14:22*)

Peter did not yet understand this when he wanted to remain with Christ on the mountain. It has been reserved for you, Peter, but for after death. For now, Jesus says: "Go down to toil on earth, to serve on earth, to be scorned and crucified on earth. Life goes down to be killed; Bread goes down to suffer hunger; the Way goes down to be exhausted on his journey; the Spring goes down to suffer thirst; and you refuse to suffer?"(St. Augustine, Sermo 78, 6: PL 38, 492-493; cf. Lk 9:33)

2600. The Gospel according to St. Luke emphasizes the action of the Holy Spirit and the meaning of prayer in Christ's ministry. Jesus prays *before* the decisive moments of his mission: before his Father's witness to him during his baptism and Transfiguration, and before his own fulfillment of the Father's plan of love by his Passion.(Cf. Lk 3:21; 9:28; 22:41-44) He also prays before the decisive moments involving the mission of his apostles: at his election and call of the Twelve, before Peter's confession of him as "the Christ of God," and again that the faith of the chief of the Apostles may not fail when tempted.(Cf. Lk 6:12; 9:18-20; 22:32) Jesus' prayer before the events of salvation that the Father has asked him to fulfill is a humble and trusting commitment of his human will to the loving will of the Father.

Sharing and Discussion

- 1.** In the biblical imagination, mountain are often privileged places of encounter with God. Where do you find God more accessible? Where do you go when you need to be reminded of God's presence?
- 2.** The voice from the cloud tells Peter, James, and John, "This is my chosen Son; listen to him." How do you communicate, listen to Jesus, in your daily life?
- 3.** The disciples fall silent after what they witness on the mountain; there are times to proclaim what we have seen of Jesus, and there are times to take it in and let it shape us. How do you discern when to proclaim and when to be silent? What are your considerations and concerns?

Closing Prayer

All: God of Moses and Elijah, send your Spirit upon us, that we might know courage, community and healing. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.