

**Second Sunday of Lent – A
February 17, 2008**

As chosen disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are privileged to join Peter, James and John on the holy mountain, to hear the voice of the Father reveal Jesus as his own beloved Son, and tell us to listen to him.

Homily

The time of Lent, and all the scripture readings, are chosen to help us prepare to participate in the central mystery of our faith, the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. This mystery is called *The Paschal Mystery*, a name that shows that we believe that this mystery is the fulfillment of the Jewish Passover, or *Pascha*.

The Old Testament Readings present the highlights of Salvation History, the mighty acts of God to redeem and save humankind. God calls special people, like Abraham, to play a part in the fulfillment of his plan which has existed from all eternity, from before creation. The human response to God's call opens channels for God's saving action to take place.

Salvation history reaches its fulfillment in Jesus, Son of God and truly human. Last Sunday, we saw Jesus as fully human, tempted like us to sin, but, unlike Adam, Eve, and all of us, remaining obedient to God and to God's call to him.

In today's reading from Genesis, we see God call Abram, whose name God will later change to Abraham, to uproot himself, leave his father's house and country, take his family and all he has, and set out for a new and strange land to which God will direct him.

God makes it a little easier for him by making him some great promises: Abram will be blessed, his name will be great, he will father a great nation, and he will be a source of blessing for all the communities of the earth. Great promises.

Abram is already eighty years old and childless. And yet he believes and acts. So a part of God's plan, of creating a people who are his own, is fulfilled through the incredible faith of this person, Abram. He is truly the father, by flesh and blood, of the Semitic peoples, and by faith, of all Christian peoples.

During Lent, the second readings all focus on our participation in the death and resurrection of the Lord through baptism and our living the Christian life.

Today, the Second Letter to Timothy speaks of the call to all of us to be Christian, a call that is based, not on any merit of ours, but on God's eternal plan, revealed by Christ.

This passage looks ahead to the gospel and Jesus' transfiguration in which Jesus is revealed as Son of God, the savior who brings life and immortality to light. It clearly looks forward to his resurrection and his glorification.

The gospels, for the first two weeks of Lent, in all three cycles, related the Lord's temptations in the desert and his transfiguration. In year A, we read Matthew's accounts of these two special events.

Matthew's account of the transfiguration closely follows Mark's account, except Matthew adds verses 6 and 7. In these verses, Matthew speaks of the fear that overwhelms the three chosen disciples as they hear the voice from the cloud. Fear is the normal human reaction in the presence of God. The fear is

**only dispelled when Jesus comes, touches them, and says:
“Rise, and have no fear.”**

The gospels for the remaining Sundays of Lent this year, up to Passion Sunday, will recount the great signs of Jesus in John’s gospel, that prefigure the saving events of Christ’s death and resurrection and our participation in them through baptism.

These readings prepare us to participate in the Paschal mystery by reminding us first of all that God is present and active in history and in the world. That God has a plan for us and for all humanity, and that that plan is being carried out.

God works through the faith, hope, and obedience of human persons like Abram, Paul, Timothy, Peter, James, and John, and all of us, as we hear and respond to his call.

His call to us is to be disciples of Jesus, truly God and truly human, who accepted the will of God to be both messiah and suffering servant. By his love and trust in the heavenly father, he reversed the bad choices, the sin, of Adam and Eve, and revealed that suffering and death lead to life and immortality.

Like Abram, God calls us during this Lent to believe in his son Jesus and to listen to him, to uproot ourselves and follow Jesus more closely. God makes incredible promises to us. If we follow Jesus to Calvary, we will also share in his eternal life and glory. What is our response?