

Homily of Second Sunday of Lent, Year A, 2026

Genesis 12:1-4; Psalm 33: 4-5, 18-19, 20, 22; 2 Timothy 1:8-10; Matthew 17:1-9

Last Sunday's first reading was about the sin of Adam and Eve, which caused their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Genesis Chapter 11 is the story of the sin of rebellion of the builders of the Tower of Babel. God scattered the builders over all the earth. After Noah, there was no record in the Book of Genesis of true worshippers of God.

God called Abram to begin a new phase of God's relationship with human beings, which also marks the beginning of the story of God's Chosen People. Abram was not a worshipper of God before God called him. Abram and his people who were descendants of Noah were worshippers of Mesopotamian gods. God called Abram to leave his religion, his "kinsfolks, and his father's house" to where he, God, would reveal himself to him, and make him a great nation. The first reading concludes, "Abram went as the Lord directed him."

Following Abram response, God began a new relationship with human beings. God is calling us out from our sins of disobedience, our rebellion, and our 'worship of other gods.' If we respond to him as Abram did, God will reveal himself in a new way to us. We pray for grace and courage to respond like Abram.

The call of Abram was special. Out of the entire people of Ur of the Chaldeans, God called only one man, Abram, to establish a new relationship and to a great nation. God may be calling anyone of us to something new, to something different, to something great. May we be able to respond positively like Abram and go as God directs.

Abram was 75 years when God called him to begin a new journey and a new life. The call of Abram means that it is never too late to bloom. It is never too late to leave the past sinful and ugly experiences behind and begin a new relationship with God. Let us be patient with ourselves. Let us be patient with late bloomers.

The second reading says, "He saved us and called us to a holy life, not according to our works but according to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus..." Psalm 130:3-4 says, "If you, Lord, keep account of sins, Lord, who can stand? But with you is forgiveness." St. Paul says, "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Abram did not deserve to be called, yet God called him, according to God's own design. None of us deserves to be called. But God loves us first (1 John 4:19). We respond positively or negatively to God's love. The Lenten season is God calling us to a new relationship. Is there anything God is calling us "to go forth from" (leave behind) for this new relationship to take place?

In the gospel, Jesus took Peter, James, and John and transfigured before them; "his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light." Jesus took them to witness his transfiguration so that they could tell others what they witnessed. It is because the three apostles witnessed the transfiguration that the story of what they witnessed is told till this day.

To transfigure means to transform the appearance of something in order to reveal great beauty or magnificence that is present but hidden. Jesus' glorious nature which was hidden from the apostles was revealed at his transfiguration.

God made each of us with great beauty and magnificence. In Genesis 1:31, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." We are part of that beauty. Psalm 139:13-14 confirms that each one of us is wonderfully and beautifully made. Sadly, layers of sins, weaknesses, and ugly experiences hide our wonder and beauty. Therefore, we are invited to transfigure in order that our original beauty and wonder may be revealed. The call to transfigure is a call to conversion and restoration. God tells us in the gospel to listen to Jesus, his beloved Son, if we want to transfigure. Psalm 95:8 calls on us, "Oh, that today you would hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

God revealed himself in a new way to Abram. Jesus revealed himself in a new way to Peter, James, and John. God wants to reveal himself in a new way to us. Many times, the cost of discipleship, that is the sacrifice, or the selfishness or self-interest, or the mission God is calling us frightens us as the apostles were frightened. Jesus encourages us today, "Rise and do not be afraid."

There are some other layers that hide our beauty and magnificence, and we pray that God intervenes and removes them: layers of ill-health, of hardship, of trials, of crises, and other afflictions. We need transfiguration in our places of work, places of business, plans, family, parish, Church, and so on. Our Country needs transfiguration. Our political and economic leaders need transfiguration. Our world needs transfiguration. May our hidden beauty and magnificence be revealed and restored. Amen.

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