 **Lent 2 A Lectionary Catechesis**

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| The Transfiguration has long been a favorite subject in icons and in west European art, Raphael’s Transfiguration is about the most popular and well known. Older and eastern depictions typically have much more symbolic detail. For all the importance of this event, the Catechism hardly references it as an historical event or a source of dogma, which means that the emphasis is clearly catechetical and evangelical. Nor is the focus about how we will be changed when we get to heaven, how we will changed here on earth, and have our sins scrubbed clean or how we need to change now. It is all about our encounter with the Lord Jesus in His glory. It isn’t about us. It’s about Jesus. At the end of all things, we will live with and share in Christ’s glory. In the gospel event, all the past and the apostles are represented as present. From a holistic overview of the readings, it is our response of faith that changes everything for us and enlightens our way to follow Christ. |

**FIRST READING: Genesis 12, 1-4a**

Abraham and Sarah come from the city of Ur of the Chaldeans (in Greek), in the Hebrew text it is Ur of the Kashdim, a difference which has caused some confusion about Abraham’s origins and dates. Originally an ethnic and linguistic group, later Chaldeans were to become artisans and craftsmen, and only in the early Christian world a rite in the Catholic Church. Ur is a city quite south of Babylon in the marshlands and very old already by the time of Abraham. Ur was founded probably by Sumerians, not a Semitic people at all. Genesis 11 counts Abraham within a large family system. Haran is located al- most at the northern most top of the Fertile Crescent. Later in Gn 12 Abraham and Sarah sojourn into Egypt before returning to Shechem. The whole territory of the Biblical events is encapsulated already within this story. Our own lives follow this same sojourn, as strangers in a strange land.

**Vss. 1-4: CCC 145** Hebrews 1 is a great eulogy to Abraham and accompanies this text.

**Vs. 1: CCC 59** After the Tower of Babel, God calls the human family together again through the blessing of Abraham who has travelled the entire Fertile Crescent of the Middle East from Ur, through Haran, to Shechem in Palestine.

**Vs. 2: CCC 762, 1669** Abraham is the beginning of the preparation of God’s covenanted people. **The second** citation teaches that lay people, like Abraham, do in fact preside at certain blessings that are sacramentals.

**Vs. 3 CCC 706, 2676** The progeny of Abraham is none other than Christ. Secondly we are taught that Abraham’s faith prefigures Mary’s blessing and being blessed. Here the Catechism teaches the Hail Mary.

**Vs. 4: CCC 2570** Abraham is a person of prayer. God calls to us in our history; we respond the “Amen!” of prayer and receive the blessings of Abraham.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Who is our father in faith and why?  What are the blessings a married couple can preside over? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Do you pray with your spouse, your parents, your brothers and sisters, or your friends?  What is Mary’s blessing for us? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | How are you sharing your faith with your children?  How and why does Abraham respond to God with his faith? |
| **WORSHIP** | What role do blessings play in the Mass? Try to count the number of blessings at Mass.  In what way is Abraham’s “Yes!” to God a blessing for all humanity? |

**First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 33, 4-5, 18-19, 20, 22**

The psalm begins with a call to worship; the setting is the Temple. Conscious of God’s creation, the human person is called to trust and worship in response. God’s creation as reliable stand in contrast to human plans and projects. The parallel theme running through the psalm is that God’s mercy (salvation) is for the person who hears and hopes in God. The psalm reads as a personal invitation in English, but in fact it is addressed to the community.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Creation is one of the traditional proofs of the existence of God. Why is this a  Reasonable answer for many?  What does the Bible mean by “fear of the Lord?” |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | In whom do you hope and place your trust?  In what way has God been at work in your life “fashioning your heart?” |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Share an example of where you see the mercy of God in our world today?  How can you share this week the mercy of God with others? |
| **WORSHIP** | What is reverence? (cf. Vs. 8)  How does the Eucharist deliver us from death? (Vs. 19) |

**Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: II Timothy 1, 8b-10**

Our reading begins in a portion of the letter that urges us to “stir in flame the gift of God,” which came through Timothy’s listening to the Word and imposition of hands. Paul is urging his disciple to remain steadfast and strong in the face of adversity and suffering for the sake of the Gospel. All of us bear some sort of hardship of one kind or the other; we either learn from it which builds our character, or we become very negative, thinking of ourselves as victims. This of course leads to fear. Yet, very few are bearing some sort of hardship for the sake of the gospel in this culture; too many think of Church and faith as “something for me.”

**Vs. 8: CCC 2471, 2506** Commenting on Life in Christ on the 8th Commandment, “In situations that require witness to the faith the Christian must profess it without equivocation . . .” The disciple should not be ashamed.

**Vss. 10: CCC 257, 1021** The salvific love in the Trinity, becomes the same mission of the Church. The Catechism cites the beautiful and very ancient hymn “Phos Hilaron” in this context. Our life is a time of decision; the encounter with Christ at the judgment when our lives bear the final weight of our decisions for or against Christ.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | The 8th Commandment prohibits bearing false witness. How is a failure to profess Jesus Christ breaking this commandment?  Why does God’s design and grace precede our good works?  Why don’t our good works buy God’s grace? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Describe and share the qualities of a holy life.  How do you bear your share of the hardship of the Gospel? Or How do you carry your cross? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | What strength do you receive from God to witness to the Gospel?  Why do we sometimes feel ashamed or very private about our faith and beliefs? |
| **WORSHIP** | What is the connection between witnessing and worship?  Locate on the internet the hymn ***Phos Hilaron*** and use it for prayer this week in the evening.  How does the liturgy “stir in flame the gift of God” |

**Second Reading**

**GOSPEL:** **Matthew 17, 1-9 The Transfiguration (cf. Mark 9, 2-8 and Luke 9, 28-36)**

Because this is meant to be an overwhelming visceral event, perhaps art is one of the better ways of approaching the Transfiguration. Among the many things happening, Jesus brings together and brings to completion the Law and the Prophets. There is also Peter’s recognition the goodness and rest in community. For Matthew, Vss. 5-6, the heavenly voice, its announcement, and the response of the disciples. This vision is not a part of Jesus’ mission at this point, because in the very next verses he orders them not to tell anyone about this vision.

**Vss. 1-8: CCC 554** The Transfiguration is set in the context of Peter’s scorn for the coming passion and death of Jesus. In other words to understand fully the glory of Christ, we must first understand this suffering.

**Vs. 5: CCC 444** Along with the Baptism of Jesus, this is the only other time a voice speaks from heaven in the Gospels. Jesus is the “beloved Son.” The parallel Christian confession of faith is in the mouth of the Roman centurion who pierces the side of Christ on the cross. Mk 15, 39 Jesus is the Son of God.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | In what way is Jesus priest, prophet and king?  Peter wanted to stay on the holy mountain in the light of this vision. Why can’t we do that?  Why does the disciple have to deny one’s self, take up the cross, and follow Jesus? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | How does your life reflect “listening to Jesus?”  How do you accept the crosses in your life in light of this vision of transfiguration?  What is your life’s vision? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Share the story of your first encounter with Jesus in your life.  Who are you sharing: Jesus crucified or Christ resurrected? |
| **WORSHIP** | Would you respond as the disciple did when they say Jesus?  Why is it good that we gather on holy ground to worship together? |

**Gospel**

**Next Sunday: Lent 3 A: Exodus 17, 1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5, 1-2. 5-8; John 4, 5-42**