**Lent 2 B Lectionary Catechesis**

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| Transfiguration Sunday in Lent foretells that through the grace of God at work in us as in Jesus we shall all be changed to be like God, that is to say, restored to our original likeness and image when we were created. The works of Lent (almsgiving, fasting and prayer) facilitate this action of grace. The readings connect the notion of sacrifice and transfiguration into glory. This is a very difficult step to make unless one is spiritually immersed in the biblical and theological tradition. It is a challenge for the homilist to connect these two. Perhaps if approached from the view of the poetics of the reign of God, and nothing merely legalistic, one might facilitate a wisdom of God. Part of the key may lie in Jesus’ request that this vision be kept secret. For ourselves in this season of Lent, we are invited, because of our relationship with Jesus Christ, to change. Lent, therefore, conforms us to Jesus Christ. |

**FIRST READING: Genesis 22, 1-2. 9a. 10-13. 15-18**

Genesis 22, 1-19 narrates the sacrifice of Isaac; the lectionary reading selects portions of the story to tell. For the Church, the central point connects this paradigmatic event to the sacrifice of God the Father of His Son on the cross. It is one of the most tender and compelling stories of the Hebrew scripture. For the lectionary the choice of verses emphasizes the result of Abraham’s unrelenting faith and the promises God covenants with him and his descendants by faith. Abraham is our father of faith. This transformation of Abraham and Isaac on Mt. Moriah prefigures the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain accompanied by Moses and the prophet. Mt. Moriah, by tradition, is the Temple Mount.

**Vss. 1-18: CCC 1819** Christian hope began with Abraham, who saw his hope fulfilled in his son, length of days, and prosperity. We “hope against hope.”

**Vs. 11: CCC 332** Angels appear and work throughout salvation history in the Biblical text.

**Vss. 17-19: CCC 706** Through Abraham’s descendants, humanity is blessed, especially through Jesus Christ. Through this Son, God will gather all the scattered descendants of this family. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the guarantor of this promise. (Ephesians 1, 13-14)

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Define hope.  What does CCC 706 say to you about the true nature, identity, and destiny of the human family from God’s perspective? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What would you have to sacrifice in your life that would be a rough equivalent of what Abraham was called to sacrifice? Why?  Have you been to Mt. Moriah? Note that this mountain is named “Fear of the Lord”, so the question is asking if you’ve been taken in your life to the test of Abraham. |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | What is the great blessing that all humans share?  In what way do we humans all share in the promises made to Abraham? |
| **WORSHIP** | Why is one way to understand the Mass, a sacrifice?  Connect the sacrifice of Abraham’s son Isaac with the Father’s sacrifice of Jesus, his Son. Why is this paradigm of sacrifice important for us? |

**First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 116, 10. 15. 16-17. 18-19**

From the third part of the psalm, we hear the key words, “I kept faith.” In a sense both the “keeping” and the “faith kept” is a play on words. Faith is not based in any rhetoric, logic, or scientific proof. In verse 13, the cup of salvation is raised. The psalm is a public declaration acknowledging praise of God, because it is set in the temple in Jerusalem. The sacrifice of thanksgiving is a particular kind of Temple sacrifice; it clearly prefigures the Eucharistic sacrifice, for Eucharist means “thanksgiving” in Greek. The psalm ends in vs. 19 with a “Hallelujah”, not sung or spoken during Lent.

**Vs. 17: CCC 1330** The Sacrament of the Eucharist is called the “Memorial of the Lord’s Passion and Resurrection”, “The Holy Sacrifice”, the “Holy and Divine Liturgy”, and “The Sacred Mysteries,” because it effects these things in reality.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | How many different names do we use for the Eucharistic liturgy and why? Which do you find yourself using most frequently?  How is sacrifice effected during the Mass? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | In what ways have you “kept faith?”  Explain how it is that the death of a faithful person is “precious” to God? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Relate the “keeping of faith” and sharing the faith as practices in your life.  How do we “pay” vows to the Lord in the presence of others? |
| **WORSHIP** | Explain the Eucharist as a “sacrifice of thanksgiving.”  What point of the Mass is an opportunity to make and complete a vow made before God? |

**Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: Romans 8, 31b-34**

Being made right before God, brings us into a state of adoption as heirs of the kingdom through the work of the Holy Spirit. The context of our reading today is the effects of being made right. The Holy Spirit enables us to pray, to bear good fruit, to experience God’s goodness, and to be brought to a new conformation to Jesus Christ. Paul then concludes his long reasoning out of this process with a rhetorical question that would have been part of a court proceeding because of the particular language that Paul uses. In some sense then, Paul shifts from a purely Torah view of things to a prophetic, spirit infused view of the new person. The choice of the reading focuses on the verse, “but handed him over for us all.”

**Vs. 31: CCC 2852** Satan is the great deceiver from the beginning. He will be defeated, however. I John 5, 18-19 explains this spiritual truth and dynamic.

**Vs. 32: CCC 603, 706, 2572** Jesus’ cry on the cross of abandonment identifies himself fully with us sinners, so that God might hear this cry of ours through Christ in order to reconcile us with God. The Sacrifice of Isaac sets out clearly the dynamics of faith and sacrifice. For #706 refers to the first reading. Here in #2572 the Church sees “a purification of faith,” because Abraham’s faith does not weaken, but rather Abraham “is conformed to the likeness of the Father who will not spare his son but will deliver him up for us all.” The context of the CCC here is the universal call to prayer as search for God.

**Vs. 34: CCC 1373, 2634** Christ remains present to the Church today through his promise to two or three gathered in my name, through his Word, through those who receive the corporal works of mercy, through the sacraments in particular the Eucharist, and in the person of the minister. The prayers of intercession are made through the groaning of the Holy Spirit before the heavenly Father.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | How do we know by faith that God is for us?  What is the “purification of faith”? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Satan is called the Prince of lies. How can we resist these temptations?  Have you personally experienced the intercession of Jesus for you? Share the story. |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Whom do you gather with to pray?  When and how does your family pray? Or if single, whom do you pray with? |
| **WORSHIP** | In what way is the Eucharist a universal call to prayer?  Why is the real presence of Christ crucial and central to our understanding of the Eucharist and of our lives? |

**Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: Mark 9, 2-10 The Transfiguration**

Mark places the Transfiguration six days after the first prediction of Jesus’ passion which establishes a clear connection between the two events. Indeed Mark, who places Jesus in the prophetic tradition, has the apostles discussing the prophet Elijah more at length than Moses, and the first miracle immediately after this is expulsion of a demon from a boy, in a similar way to the prophet Elijah. Then the Transfiguration itself discloses the Resurrection. The point seems to be that belief in the Resurrection shapes disciples as much as the cross. Listening to Jesus means to accept both for one’s own life.

**Vs. 2: CCC 552** Simon Peter has primacy over the college of the twelve apostles because it was given to him by Jesus when he professed his faith. His mission is to keep this faith and strengthen the Church in the same faith.

**Vs. 7: CCC 151, 459** For the Christian, believing in God means believing in his Son; this means that in particular one can no longer say, “All religions are really just the same.” They are not. This reductionism that then excuses us, is not an answer. We believe IN Jesus precisely because He is God. “The Word became flesh to be our model of holiness.” Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. His love remains the model for our love, and it is sacrificial, oblative love. Remember St. Thomas Aquinas’ definition of love: “Love means to will the good of the other simply and purely.”

**Vss. 9-31: CCC 557** In Mark’s gospel, Jesus identifies himself with the prophets, who can die in no other place than in Jerusalem, so Jesus begins his journey to the city.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Why is Jesus transfigured on the mountain? In other what does this have to do with our faith?  What does the voice from heaven tell us about our faith and relationship with Jesus? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | We listen to Jesus in the gospels every Sunday. What does Jesus say to you that is the most challenging to listen to?  What do you think changes most in the lives of Peter, James, and John? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Does our communal conversation include the questioning of the disciples as they come down from the mountain?  Rate the “whiteness” of your baptismal garment when you are out in the workplace, your family, and in our society at large. |
| **WORSHIP** | What does “rising from the dead” mean in light of or in the context of the liturgy?  How does the listening in the Liturgy of the Word shape your life each week? |

**Gospel**

**Next Sunday: Lent 3 B: Ex 20, 1-17; Ps 19; I Cor 1, 22-25; John 2, 13-25**