

28 FEBRUARY 2021

# Sunday Message

2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT

Year B • Psalter Week 2

## THE WORD



Stained glass in Votivkirche in Vienna, Austria depicting the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor

In the Gospel tradition, the story of the transfiguration of Jesus stands at the beginning of Jesus' journey to Judaea and Jerusalem, where the events of the paschal mystery will take place.

This incident corresponds to the narrative of Jesus' baptism, which inaugurates his mission in Galilee. There are several significant details: the high mountain is traditionally a place of revelation and the cloud is a sign of the divine presence; Elijah and Moses represent the Prophets and the Law of Jewish heritage; the heavenly voice speaks to the disciples, whereas the baptism was a personal experience of Jesus himself; Jesus commands the disciples to keep silent about what has transpired, this time, until he is risen.

Mark tells us that Jesus was "transfigured": his glorified body shines through his garments, rendering them brilliantly white. Thus the three disciples are given a glimpse of Jesus' true identity. Their reaction is that of someone who has experienced something of the divine: they are awestruck. But glory comes at a price: immediately after the abrupt ending of the episode, a reference to the coming events in Jerusalem appears. The cross makes its presence felt: the title "Son of Man" is usually associated with the suffering Jesus. Jesus had spoken earlier about his future passion and in that context had given his teaching on discipleship. Now he introduces the theme of "rising from the dead", which Peter, James and John discuss among themselves; but rising from the dead presupposes the passion and death of Jesus which will precede it. ■

## REFLECT

If you want to watch and properly enjoy a film or the recording of a sports event, there is nothing worse than someone telling you the ending or the final score. Sometimes you will be warned that a "spoiler alert" is coming and that you should turn away now! This incident of the transfiguration – or transformation – of Jesus, which occurs at the mid-point of his ministry, gives us a glimpse of the end of the story. It shows us Jesus Christ in glory, but sets this vision against the background of his passion and death, as he sets out on his journey to Jerusalem and his destiny. At this point, as we have set out on our journey with Jesus through Lent, we are also given an assurance – a sneak preview – that Calvary will not be the end of the story.

The words of the voice from the cloud are addressed to us today, "This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him." Jesus has spoken in the Gospel about the cost of being his disciple and taking up the cross and following him.

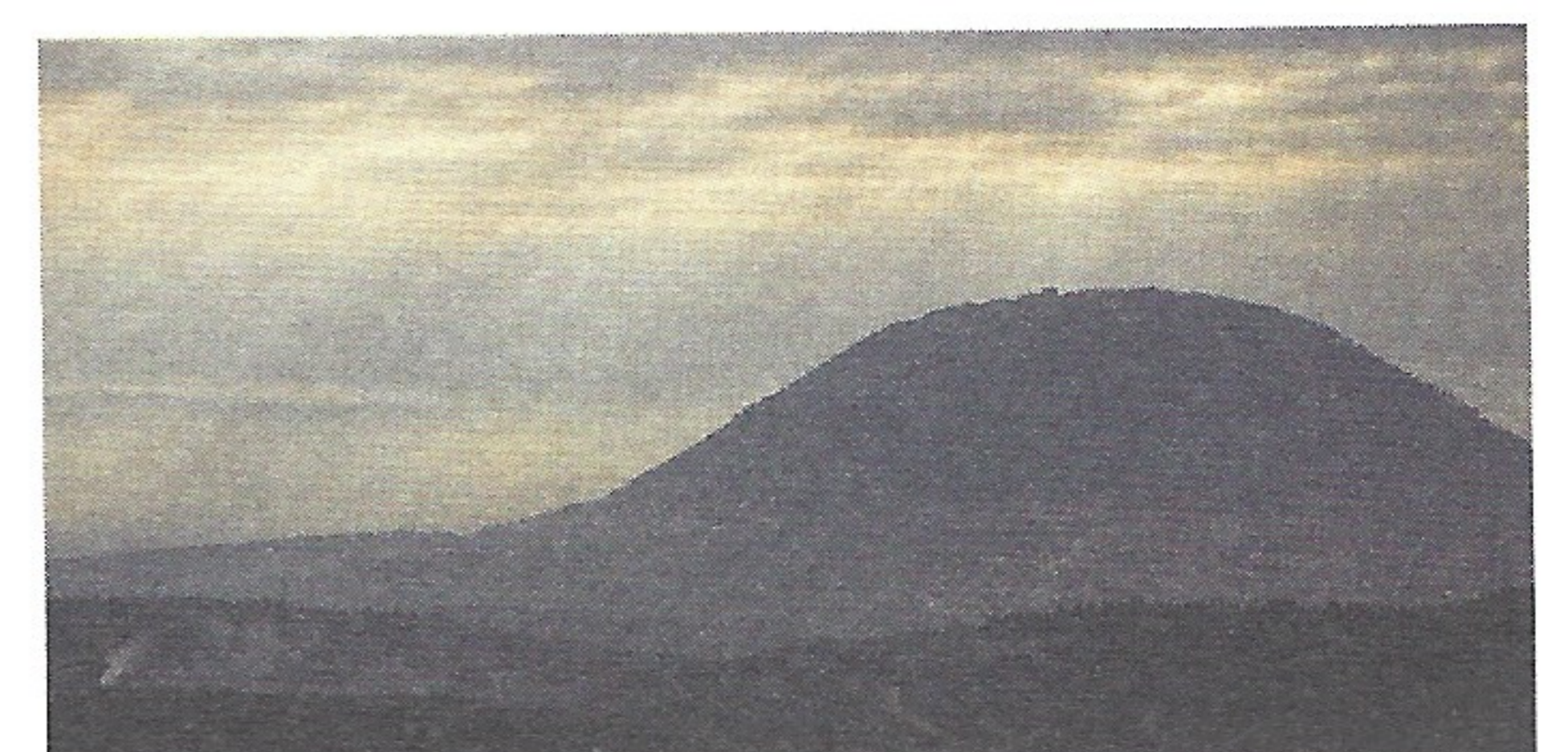
Occasionally, we may experience a strong sense of the presence of God in our lives, but this feeling does not usually last very long. Peter's reaction to the vision of the glorified Jesus is to build tents to prolong the experience, but this is not to be. Peter, like ourselves, has to come down from the mountain, back to normal life. ■

## LEARN

The text of the Gospel talks about Jesus being "transfigured" in the presence of his disciples.

Elijah is the figure who represents the prophetic tradition of Israel: Moses personifies the Law, the Torah.

The site of the transfiguration is traditionally located at Mount Tabor, the highest peak in the Holy Land.



### SAY

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

(1 Samuel 3:9)

### DO

Spend some time looking at the crucifix: reflect on how it is the ultimate symbol of Jesus' giving of himself in service to the Father for our sake.

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

**Of you my heart has spoken: Seek his face.  
It is your face, O Lord, that I seek;  
hide not your face from me.**

**COLLECT**

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.**

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

A reading from the book of Genesis.

God put Abraham to the test. "Abraham, Abraham" he called. "Here I am" he replied. "Take your son," God said, "your only child Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him as a burnt offering, on a mountain I will point out to you."

When they arrived at the place God had pointed out to him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood. Then he stretched out his hand and seized the knife to kill his son.

But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven. "Abraham, Abraham" he said. "I am here" he replied. "Do not raise your hand against the boy, the angel said. "Do not harm him, for now I know you fear God. You have not refused me your son, your only son." Then looking up, Abraham saw a ram caught by its horns in a bush. Abraham took the ram and offered it as a burnt-offering in place of his son.

The angel of the Lord called Abraham a second time from heaven. "I swear by my own self – it is the Lord who speaks – because you have done this, because you have not refused me your son, your only son, I will shower blessings on you, I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore. Your descendants shall gain possession of the gates of their enemies. All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, as a reward for your obedience."

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM**

Psalm 115

Response:

**I will walk in the presence of the Lord  
in the land of the living.**

1. I trusted, even when I said:  
"I am sorely afflicted."

O precious in the eyes of the Lord  
is the death of his faithful. (R.)

2. Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;  
you have loosened my bonds.

A thanksgiving sacrifice I make:  
I will call on the Lord's name. (R.)

3. My vows to the Lord I will fulfil  
before all his people,  
in the courts of the house of the Lord,  
in your midst, O Jerusalem. (R.)

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

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans.

With God on our side who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us – he rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Glory and praise to you, O Christ!**

**From the bright cloud the Father's voice was heard:**

**"This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him!"**

**Glory and praise to you, O Christ!**

**GOSPEL**

Mark 9:2-10

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark.

Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone by themselves. There in their presence he was transfigured: his clothes became dazzlingly white, whiter than any earthly bleacher could make them. Elijah appeared to them with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. "Rabbi," he said "it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." He did not know what to say; they were so frightened. And a cloud came, covering them in shadow; and there came a voice from the cloud, "This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him." Then suddenly, when they looked round, they saw no one with them any more but only Jesus.

As they came down the mountain he warned them to tell no one what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They observed the warning faithfully, though among themselves they discussed what "rising from the dead" could mean.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

**I believe in God,**

**the Father almighty,**

**Creator of heaven and earth,**

**and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

*(all bow during the next two lines)*

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

**born of the Virgin Mary,**

**suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

**was crucified, died and was buried;**

**he descended into hell;**

**on the third day he rose again from the dead;**

**he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the  
Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the living  
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting. Amen.**

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

May this sacrifice, O Lord, we pray, cleanse us of our faults and sanctify your faithful in body and mind for the celebration of the paschal festivities. Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

**This is my beloved Son, with whom I am  
well pleased;  
listen to him.**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

As we receive these glorious mysteries, we make thanksgiving to you, O Lord, for allowing us while still on earth to be partakers even now of the things of heaven.

Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

