

CATHOLIC CONVERSATIONS ON THE SCRIPTURES
Archdiocese of Miami - Ministry of Christian Formation

March 8, 2009

2nd Sunday of Lent (Cycle B)

Gospel reading: Mark 9:2-10



Jesus took Peter, James and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses*, and they were conversing with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified. Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; from the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them. As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant. ***Two key Old Testament figures, Moses the Lawgiver and Elijah the Prophet.**

Brief commentary:

The second Sunday of Lent always tells the story of the transfiguration of Jesus. This glorious epiphany* stands in contrast to the temptations that we read last Sunday. The temptations highlighted the humanity of Jesus, the Son of Man, who became like us even to the point of being tempted by the devil. The transfiguration reflects his divinity. Jesus is the Son of God who manifests his glory to three of his disciples. His appearance changed as it also did in his glorified body after the resurrection. Mark's narrative follows the first of the three predictions of Jesus' Passion, in which Jesus teaches his disciples that he will have to suffer greatly. Placing the story of the Transfiguration after his first Passion prediction reveals that, while Jesus is the Messiah, his triumph will come through his suffering and death.

Peter wants to capture the moment by keeping Jesus, Moses and Elijah there with them. However, Mark does not allow his readers to linger on the mountaintop. Jesus knew, says Mark, that they would have difficulty accepting his suffering and death. Consequently, he tells them not to get too excited about the glory of the transfiguration event until after he has risen from the dead.

***Manifestation of God on earth.**

Today's reading offers three significant messages:

- The presence of Moses and Elijah is a sign that Jesus will fulfill the expectations of the Hebrew people.
- The revelation of the glory of God climaxes with a voice from the clouds as in Jesus' baptism. He is God's Son and we need to listen to him.
- The goal of the Christian is not just to know "about" God, but to know God through direct experience.

For our shared or personal reflection:

After a brief pause for silent reflection share your answers, ideas or feelings.

1. Do I expect only moments of glory from God? Do I remain faithful when things are not going my way?
2. Am I willing to walk with others in their moments of suffering?

Suggested readings: Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraphs 151; 444; 459; 552-556; 649.