

**Love is not reasonable. When there are many verbal reasons, I suspect this is a transaction and not a transfiguration.**

Genesis 22:1-2, 9, 10-13, 15-18

Psalms 116:10, 15, 16-19

**Romans 8:31-34** 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.

**Meditation** by Larry Gillick, S.J. (Deglman Center for Ignatian Spirituality)

#### PREPRAYING

The grace we ask for has to do with our two senses of hearing and seeing. We pray to distinguish between the Word of God and projecting our selfish desires into God's Word. Hearing differs from listening and we pray to allow the Word of God into the center of our lives where we can listen to it and to what that Word calls us.

We are invited also to pray for seeing better in Christ's Light so to become familiar with the path that leads to true life. The light for which we pray is not the same as clarity of course. Our readings for this liturgy and the spirituality of Lent call us to a faith and a listening which lead to our trusting God.

#### REFLECTION

The First Reading and the Gospel for this liturgy present us with two experiences of liturgy, in a way. There is a going up, a preparation or calling together, a central act of faith, a "Word of God", a surprising revelation of the "real presence of God, and a going onward.

We hear first of the terrifying story of Abraham's being tested by God. He is called to take his only son, Isaac, to a distant place and sacrifice him by the knife and then burning him on an altar which Isaac would help build. Abraham takes his son who helps carry the fire and the wood and off they go in a journey of trust. Upon arrival at a divinely-pointed-out hill, the dirty deed is set in motion, no questions asked, except by Isaac who asks about the lamb to be slain.

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At the point of the knife's being about to enter Isaac who has been bound and placed on the altar, the voice of the Lord's messenger calls for a timeout. Abraham has proven his faith so that he is not only the father of Isaac still, but the "Father of Faith" and the eternal model for the People of God. A ram is tangled up in a near-by bush and so God has provided the means for the sacrifice rather than Abraham. A promise is then made by the Messenger of God that, through Abraham, as he continues living in faith, his descendants who will increase through this same Isaac, will flourish and possess a land of blessing.

The Gospel presents us with the "Transfiguration", or the "the Changing of the Garb". Peter, James and John go up a hill with Jesus. They have a most intimate encounter with Jesus, God the Beyond, and of course, themselves. Jesus dazzles His followers with some state of glorification. Moses and Elijah are seen conversing with Jesus. Moses is the "man of the Law" and Elijah the "man of Prophecy". Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law and the prophets and the "voice" again ordains Him as "My beloved Son." The terrified trio is encouraged also to, "Listen to Him."

Immediately, there they are, just the four again and nobody else, no other sounds. They leave with this experience and their questions about what all this was about. They are charged also not to speak about it until the "rising from the dead", and they did not understand this either, but they kept on walking back down from this hill of intimacy.

Most of us orient our lives, in varying degrees, toward and from the Eucharistic liturgy. We try also to be women and men who pray, what ever that means. Abraham and Isaac have an extreme close calling with God. Peter, James and John experience an unusual convention and communion. All five go off into the regular, back-down-the-hill living of their lives. Their faith seems to be strengthened, but at the same time their understanding seems to experience befuddlement. They would naturally be asking themselves about the "realness" of what had just happened.

One of the great joys of human intimacy is that it goes beyond reason. I enjoy asking couples whom I have the privilege to be preparing for marriage, "Why do you love her/him?" The relationships I trust the most are those who fumble around for words which might express some good reasons. Love is not reasonable. When there are many verbal reasons, I suspect this is a transaction and not a transfiguration. Devotion, prayer, liturgy are such calls to simple and honest closeness, that to try to figure it out and explain it cheapens it and flattens it out into a practice rather than a delight.

As with Abraham, Isaac, Peter, James and John, we go toward a time of being met by the Holy, given something of ourselves by the encouragement and comfort of God's presence and then sent away, but always the little question, "Was that really real?" "Was I talking to myself, comforting myself, judging myself?" Intimacy does not lead to comprehending, but to the sending, the living, the transfiguring, or changing, because we are so loved.

I love the Eucharist for so many reasons, but the very prime reason is that it defies adequate intellectual explanation and I love that freedom from the factual, the scientific, the demand of my arrogant mind. The Eucharist is more than a transfiguration; it is a total trans from a something

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to a Somebody. The Somebody's changing of the other somebodies who gather around the Holy Place is also unexplainable, but real. The closer we allow Jesus to come toward and within us, the more we, individually and communally, are transfigured and re-presented to the world. The world cannot adequately explain our living as His New and Real Presence. We will never know if our prayer was real. Abraham is our Father of Faith and our brothers of faith walked down that hill with questions, doubts and wonderings about what in Heaven's Name was all that about? Questions do not dampen faith, cheap answers do. Living the faith is the proof of intimacy, just as living out married love intensifies and proves the leap.

"I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living. I believed, even when I said, "I am greatly afflicted." Responsorial Psalm, 116

## **Supplementary Readings**

### **Simple Truths**

{xtypo\_quote} Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding – Proverbs 3:5 {/xtypo\_quote}

I'll never forget the story of the young boy who went to Sunday school and was taught that we're all made in the image of God. He also learned that God created the first man from the dust of the earth and that when we die the body once more turns to dust.

One evening as the little boy knelt by his bed to say his prayers, he suddenly stiffened with fear. His mother asked, "Tommy, what's wrong?" Looking under the bed he sneezed from the dust accumulated there and said, "There are hundreds of them under the bed. I just can't tell if they're coming or going."

Dust to dust. It's tempting to make God's word more complex than he ever intended. His truths are simple. They are redeeming. They give us God's timeless design for divine dignity.

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Don't let the Word of God intimidate you. Choose and read a short passage of Scripture today. And as you read, simply note one truth you discover there.

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Note: This excerpt was taken from the "Power for Life Daily Devotional"  
**ALL!**

**GOD BLESS US**

**PRAY** as if everything depended on **HIM**. **ACT** as if everything depended on **YOU**.

<http://his-ways-better-than-our-ways.blogspot.com> <http://www.mabuhayradio.com/Sections/SunSermon.html>

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