



**Deacon Steve Szmuto's Reflection on the
Sunday Readings**

March 8, 2020 – Second Sunday of Lent

Genesis 12: 1-4a Psalm 33: 4-5, 18-20, 22 2

Timothy 1: 8b-10

Matthew 17: 1-9

“Behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.’” (Matthew 17)

Continuing our journey into the Season of Lent, we encounter the profound account of the Transfiguration of the Lord in the Reading from the Gospel of Matthew. Only Jesus' closest apostles witnessed the moment of divine revelation: Peter, James and John. Throughout the Season of Lent, the Gospel Readings reveal the true nature of Jesus in both his divinity and humanity, the only begotten Son of God became man – the Christ, fulfillment of prophecy and the one who would bring salvation to the people. Each Sunday, we draw nearer to the Paschal Sacrifice, whereby the Scriptures are fulfilled and we are presented with the fullness of faith: Jesus, Son of God and Messiah, who came to save humanity from their sins, reconciling all men and women – created in the image and likeness of God – to that state which had been lost through the sin of Adam. And in that reconciliation, we are called to be disciples to spread the Good News of Salvation as members of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

There are many people in this world who regard Jesus as a great teacher, a gifted healer, and perhaps even a prophet. And this is correct – as far as it goes. However, there have been many teachers, healers and prophets throughout history. Unique to Christ is his revealed identity as the eternally begotten Son of God, who became man. I would strongly suggest that were Christ not the Son of God, then what would be the point of it all! Our faith rests upon the person of Christ as Lord and Redeemer. It's that simple! Yet, in its simplicity, it is profound enough for us to devote our lives to faith, understanding and witness. This fundamental truth is contained throughout the Holy Scriptures and is promulgated daily throughout the world by the actions of the Church.

In today's reading from the Gospel of Matthew, we recall a moment of great revelation: *“And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him.”* What wonder, awe and joy must Peter, James and John have experienced! To hear the voice of God proclaim – *“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him,”* – must have been an incomparable moment not only in their lives, but in all of human history, save perhaps his appearance to the disciples after the resurrection. In the moment of transfiguration, Jesus conversed with Moses and Elijah, the unity of prophecy and fulfillment – and these men were witnesses to this!

As one might expect, the three apostles sought to preserve the moment. Peter said, *“Lord it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”* Alas, the moment would not last forever. They, along with Jesus, would descend from the mountain and continue their journey. Ahead lay Jerusalem, where Jesus would complete his mission, which would culminate in his passion, death and resurrection – the singular perfect sacrifice.

Our own journeys of faith are similar to those of Peter, James and John. Despite moments of profound revelation, we, like the apostles, return to the world. As did these men, we stumble and fall in sin as we live in a world often opposed to the Gospel message. Yet, in difficult times, we may garner strength from these moments of transfiguration. Prayer, adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, Fasting and Penance, and most importantly the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy: these can fill us with sufficient grace to withstand temptation and live as faithful disciples. Let us continue to be nourished by the Eucharist, Jesus' Precious Body and Blood. Let us proclaim in joyful unison: *“Lord, it is good to be here.”*

Deacon Steve Szmuto