In the Transfiguration, the apostles experienced Yeshua (Jesus) as the special gift of God, of his Son. He is present today as the Risen Lord, the Lamb that was slain, giving new life.

With awesome wonder, we acclaim:

"Let all that is within me cry holy. 
Let all that is within me cry holy. 
Holy, holy, holy is the Lamb that was slain."  
(Melville Harrell)

Here I am (Gen. 22:1), is Abraham’s response to God’s invitation to walk with him, and God asks him for his most precious gift, his son.

God acknowledges Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his beloved son and God promises him: I will shower blessings on you because...you have not refused me your son (Gen. 22:1).

The sacrifice of Abraham is prophetic of Calvary when God did not spare his own Son (Rom. 8:31), He died for all that we may have life. Such is God’s gift and tremendous love.

God himself, proclaims to us His most precious gift, This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him (Mk.9:7).

Here the Son of God became flesh and dwelt among us. He lived and died for us. He rose from the dead (Rom.8:34) and conquering death, he gives us new life, the gift of eternal life.

This is the kerygma, the apostolic proclamation of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The apostles had to learn and discuss among themselves what this rising from the dead could mean (Mk.9:10), the mystery of faith.

This is our vocation and our destiny, to be with the Lord, now and for ever, walking in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living (Ps. 115:9).

In the Gospel, see the gift of God and listen to his voice that speaks of sacrifice. (Mk.9:2-10).

"Let all that is within me cry Jesus. 
Let all that is within me cry Jesus. 
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus is the lamb that was slain."
We experience the gift and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, in the **Mass**, who died, rose, will come again.

The Church’s **Teaching** and experience is based on the living presence of Christ and **with God on our side who can be against us?** (Rom. 8:31).  

God gave us His beloved Son. Jesus laid down his life for us. Let our response be in the making of our sacrifice to God. A **Your servant, Lord, your servant am I** (Ps.115:16). Give up something, do something for God for Lent.

**FOR THE CHILDREN**

Read about the Transfiguration of Jesus (Mk. 9:2-10). **What is God saying in the Gospel?**  

*Where do we meet God=s beloved Son today and receive his most precious gift?*  

(Liturgy)

Our faith proclaims Jesus **standing at God=s right hand and pleads for us** (Rm.8:34)/(Creed)

Jesus is God=s gift to you. Think of ways that you can be God=s gift to others.  

(Witness)

**FOR TEENAGERS (Christian Praxis)**

My Present Action:  

What does Yeshua (Jesus) as a person mean to you?

Your Story and Vision:  

Have you any experiences of Yeshua in your life?

Church=s Story:  

What are the Church=s experiences of the Lord?

Church=s Story and Your Story:  

What is your experience of the Church?

Your Vision and Church=s Vision:  

How would you like to work with the Church?

**RCIA**

"God has visited his people. He has fulfilled the promise he made to Abraham and his descendants. He acted far beyond all expectation—he has sent his own beloved Son.”  

(Catholic Catechism of the Church. 422).

**LIFE EXPERIENCE**

Appreciating Jesus Christ depends on how you see him and your understanding of faith, which itself is a gift. I have recently witnessed debates about science and religion. Persons differ as to which is the last word, academically and practically. Lifestyles focus more on science than on revelation, leaving one wondering what is the centre of it all. “It is significant,” says Paul Johnston, “that the great majority of those who work in the scientific world – perhaps as many as 80 percent – profess some kind of religious belief”(i), to mention some of greatest latest like Max Planck and Albert Einstein in ‘quantum physics’ and Gregor Mendel and Francis Collins of ‘genetic’ and ‘genome’ fame, respectively. God has given us a roadmap for the journey through life, his ‘Word’. One cannot be absolutely sure about other maps, for who else has completed the journey of life and come back? Other sciences and disciplines may add light to the journey but that is only a means, serving the cause, not the final word. The assistant is not greater than the master. No human insight can
gainsay the divine mystery. The more one ponders the Word of God the more one sees the destiny of science and one’s own destiny. This is the ultimate discipline of the true disciple.


‘The Quest for God’ for Paul Johnston, is not simply giving answers but sharing his thoughts on the existence of God. In a Cartesian way, he takes nothing for granted except that his cogito is his conscience. He examines atheists with their obiter dicta, death of God pronouncements. He finds them materialistic, ending not in human happiness but human misery. He claims our conscience actually intuits God, going back to ancient mythologies’ search for God depicted in many different ways, especially anthropomorphically. The Bible, in fact more than anthropomorphizes God. It shows the divine Incarnation in Christ. Johnston also details a number of God-related issues, such as creation, problem of evil, life, death and after-life. He describes ‘last judgement,’ as not delivering verdicts but confirming them already reached in the heart of each individual; (ii) In fact, he ends where he began, with his conscience. Ultimately, like Newman, he sees the gift of God as the ‘kindly light amid the encircling gloom,’ and believes like Therese of Lisieux, who said, “I am not dying. I am entering eternal life.” (iii)


LITTLE ANGELINA

Angelina is proud of the gift she received. It is a new Bible. Not only does she love its pictures, she enjoys reading it and learning the pronunciation of new words. How much does she understand the Word? I suppose in using the Narnian analogy of “the whole country is in the wardrobe”(i), one could explain to her that in the Word one comes to the whole Kingdom of God.”


“Girls grow quicker than books”(ii), says C.S. Lewis in his introduction to ‘The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.’ It is an adventure of four children, brothers and sisters, who go into a wardrobe and journey into a strange world beyond time. They encounter fantastic creatures and join in epic battles of good and evil. This is depicted in the armies of the martyred lion-king Aslan and the wicked Snow Queen Jadis, casting her cold spell over the land.

Lewis creates a country where magic meets reality, presenting the truths of life and death in a fairy tale way. He reminds Lucy, his god-daughter, “you are already too old for fairy tales. But some day you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again.”(iii)


(iii) Ibid.

IMPORTANT WORD: ‘Sacrifice of Abraham’, Binding of Isaac, אֲשֵׁרָה לֹא וְיִרְאֵהּ יהָאָרָחִים, = Akedah (Gen.22:9)

Jews do not speak of the >Sacrifice of Abraham= but of אֲשֵׁרָה לֹא וְיִרְאֵהּ יהָאָרָחִים (‘akedah) which means >binding,= binding of Isaac. He was not actually sacrificed but bound (אֲשֵׁרָה לֹא וְיִרְאֵהּ יהָאָרָחִים) on the altar. Abraham was poised with knife in hand, when a voice from heaven intervened and saved Isaac’s life. Lifted from the altar, Isaac is back in the arms of his loving father. It all happened on a mount in Jerusalem, Moriah.

Interestingly, Isaac is here referred to as אֲשֵׁרָה לֹא וְיִרְאֵהּ יהָאָרָחִים, yahid (Gen.22:2), which means ‘only son,’ ‘precious one,’ Abraham=s unique miracle child. Jesus is yahid, God=s only begotten Son (Jn.3:16), sacrificed on a mount in Jerusalem, Calvary.

P.S.: Many believe the site of Moriah is the same Mount Calvary in Jerusalem.

“Behold the Lamb of God” (Jn.1:29)

Watchword: A The Lord will provide the lamb for sacrifice (Gen. 22:8).

Hebrew: אֲשֵׁרָה לֹא וְיִרְאֵהּ יהָאָרָחִים Elohim yireh - lo haseh le>olah.
Lesson 63:

THE SYMBOLIC WAY

Babin expounds how an appropriate way of expressing the Gospel today is the “Symbolic Way,” being the dominant language of the modern media. It is a way that makes alive abstract words, a dynamic way of expressing thought. It is in fact an ancient way found in all religions and used by Jesus Christ. Babin refers to it as the royal way for communicating the invisible, a way of catechesis that speaks to the inner man and woman. Here in the depths of our being, a connection can be made between our archetypes and dogmas.

Symbolic language is different from literary language inasmuch as it is a language of the heart. It is a transformation experience based on immersion, producing effects that lead one into a sense of the Mystery. Audio-visual language and its media can be exploited on this level.

A good audio-visual document is symbolic, consisting of a complex of sounds, images, words, gestures, rhythms, relationships and many factors eliciting a physical conditioning and psychic emotions. (i) It is a type of pilgrimage that can give you a new sense of self, and challenge you to “Go from your country” (Genesis 12:1), into the wilderness. This experience combined with moments of silence is important. It is not just a question of thinking but also feeling, opening your senses to look, touch, and listen, enhancing a sense of the beyond.

This is not to say that all audio-visual language is religious experience nor every symbolic experience necessarily leads to the Kingdom of God but they do help to create the occasion and sense for a moment of truth. A good audio-visual document speaks well to a new generation seeking faith, not so much for knowledge but rather for spiritual fulfillment and healing. It is a way that speaks to the whole person – body, feelings and sensations. Symbolic language enables one to go beyond human understanding to a sense of mysteries. Babin describes it as a way of plunging into our archetypes and coming to a deeper meaning of the truths of life and faith. Examples of archetypal experiences are pilgrimages, mountains, desert, water and even meals, all of which can be occasions for events and religious awareness of self and of God.

Basically, the ‘Symbolic Way’ is not a way of information but a communication of an experience. It focuses on events, key moments, key words, persons, images and archetypes. A catechetical example would be to focus on the experiences of Moses, Exodus, journey, mountain and God.

STEREO-CATECHESIS

Ideally, Babin envisages a STEREO-CATECHESIS. “Stereo”, in audio-visual language, implies two channels operating together. “Channel One” being the “Symbolic Way” and “Channel Two” the traditional “Catechetical Way.” While “Channel One” speaks the language of our times, arousing peoples’ interiority, “Channel Two” with its language of precision, spells out the Creed and formulas.
These channels can work in harmony where experience and dogma come together for human wholeness in catechesis.