At Transfiguration, the apostles experienced Yeshua (Jesus) as the special gift of God, of his Son. He is present today as 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 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. “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 (Shared 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 Yeshua?

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 fulfilled the promise he made to Abraham and his descendants. He acted far beyond all expectation—he has sent his own beloved Son.” (Catechism of Catholic 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,”1 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 about giving answers but sharing thoughts on 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 the last judgment as not delivering verdicts but confirming them already reached in the heart of each individual.2 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.”3


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, using the *Narnian* analogy, she sees “the whole country in the wardrobe,” 1 the Word shows us the Kingdom of God.


“Girls grow quicker than books”2 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 magic realm, where the Bible is alive, 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.”3


3 Ibid.

**IMPORTANT WORD:** ‘Sacrifice of Abraham’, *-binding of Isaac*. עקידת יצחק, *Akedah* (Gen.22:9)

Jews do not speak of the ‘Sacrifice of Abraham’ but of *‘ BINDING’ of Isaac*. He was not actually sacrificed but bound 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 יָהִד, *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.

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

Hebrew: אלהים ייראה לו השה עלולה Elahim yireh-lo hashe leolah.

Greek: Ό θεός συγχέων εκεῖνο προβατόν εις ολοκαυτωσίν. Ho Theos opsetai eauto probaton eis holocarposin.

Latin: *Deus providebit sibi victimam holocausti.*

---

**COPTIC APOCALYPSE OF PETER** (200-300)

Coptic Apocalypse of Peter (*Revelation of Peter*) is a Christian apocalypse of *Gnosis* in which the saviour reveals to Peter the meaning of the crucifixion and the nature of true Christianity. It is a 3rd century *Gnostic* writing, falsely ascribed to a prominent apostle, discovered at *Nag Hammadi* and frequently confused with *Apocalypse of Peter*, a 2nd century Christian text. This*Coptic Apocalypse of Peter* is a *docetic* writing, claiming that Jesus had no physical body. The real Jesus stood with Peter, laughing at the crucifixion of not his body but just a phantom. “The one whose hands and feet they nailed to the cross was only a fleshly substitute.” No early Christian writer considered this document as canonical.

The apocalypse criticizes the structures of a Great Church in process of consolidation, and appropriation of Peter as inaugurator of *Gnosis*. It contains important source material for a *gnostic* Christology that under-stands Jesus as a *docetic* redeemer. The view of the *Gnostic* community, including its relationship to Peter as its originator is a key theme. Of great interest is the identity of the *gnostic* group to which the writing is addressed, and the controversy, between emerging orthodoxy and heresy.

P.S.: *Docetism* (from the Greek dokeo, “to seem”) is a belief that Jesus’ physical body was an illusion, as was his crucifixion, and that he only seemed to have a body and die, in reality he was incorporeal, a pure spirit, and hence could not physically die.
Homiletic rhetoric: derisive rhetoric: ridicule (the use of derision, laughter, or mockery to disparage a person or idea).

Jesus stood with Peter, laughing at the crucifixion of not his body but just a phantom.

TEXTS FROM THE COPTIC APOCALYPSE OF PETER

As the Savior was sitting in the temple in the three hundredth year of the covenant and agreement of the 10th pillar, being satisfied with the number of the living, incorruptible Majesty, he said to me "Peter, blessed are those above belonging to the Father who revealed life to who are from life, through me, since I reminded they who are built on what is strong, that they may hear my word, and distinguish words of unrighteousness and transgression of law from righteousness, as being from the height of every word of this Pleroma of truth having been enlightened in good pleasure by him whom principalities sought. But they did not find him, nor was he mentioned among any generation of the prophets. He has now appeared among these, in him who appeared who is the Son of Man, who is exalted above the heavens in a fear of men of like essence. But you yourself, Peter, become perfect in accordance with your name with myself, the one who chose you, because from you I have established a base for the remnant whom I have summoned to knowledge. Therefore be strong until the imitation of righteousness - of him who had summoned you, having summoned you to know him in a way which is worth doing because of the rejection which happened to him, and the sinews of his hands and his feet, and the crowning by those of the middle region, and the body of his radiance which they bring in hope of service because of a reward of honour - as he was about to reprove you three times in this night."...

"For many will accept our teaching in the beginning. And they will turn from them again by the will of the Father of their error, because they have done what he wanted. And he will reveal them in his judgment, i.e., the servants of the Word. But those who become mingled with these shall become their prisoners, since they are without perception. And the guileless, good, pure one they push to the worker of death, and to the kingdom of those who praise Christ in a restoration. And they praise the men of the propagation of falsehood, those who will come after you. And they will cleave to the name of a dead man, thinking that they will become pure. But they will become greatly defiled and they will fall into a name of error, and into the hand of an evil, cunning man and a manifold dogma, and they will be ruled without law."...

When he had said those things, I saw him seemingly being seized by them. And I said "What do I see, O Lord? That it is you yourself whom they take, and that you are grasping me? Or who is this one, glad and laughing on the tree? And is it another one whose feet and hands they are striking?"...

The Saviour said to me, "He whom you saw on the tree, glad and laughing, this is the living Jesus. But this one into whose hands and feet they drive the nails is his fleshly part, which is the substitute being put to shame, the one who came into being in his likeness. But look at him and me."

I saw someone approach us resembling him, even him who was laughing on the tree. And he was filled with a Holy Spirit, and he is the Saviour. And there was a great, ineffable light around them, and the multitude of invisible angels blessing them. And when I looked at him, the one who gives praise was revealed.

And he said to me, "Be strong, you are the one to whom these mysteries have been given, to know them through revelation, that he whom they crucified is the firstborn, ..he home of demons, and the stony vessel in which they dwell, of Elohim, of the cross, which is under the Law. But he who stands by is the living Saviour, the first in him, whom they seized and released, who stands joyfully looking at those who did him violence, while they are divided among themselves. Therefore he laughs at their lack of perception, knowing that they are born blind. So then the one susceptible to suffering shall come, since the body is the substitute. But what they released was my incorporeal body. But I am the intellectual Spirit filled with radiant light. He whom you saw coming to me is our intellectual Pleroma, which unites the perfect light with my Holy Spirit."

When he (Jesus) had said these things, he (Peter) came to himself.