

www.sjti.ac.za/resources_homily.htm

First Reading: Genesis 15:5-12,17-18
Response: *"The Lord is my light and my help"* (Ps.26:1)
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 26:1,7-9,13-14.
Second Reading: Philippians 3:17-4:1
Gospel: Luke 9:28-36

Experiencing the Risen Lord today was prophetically seen in the apostolic experience of the Transfiguration. We see the glory of God, his full Presence, *Shekinah*, in Jesus Christ, who makes a New Covenant for the Kingdom of God as proclaimed in the New Testament.

The Old Testament takes us back to the ancient covenants God made with his people. We see how *"Abram put his faith in the Lord"* (Gen.15:2) and experiences a *mysterious* covenantal sacrifice in his walk with God. Lent is such a walk into the mysteries of Easter.

Genesis describes how *"darkness had fallen, and there appeared a smoking furnace"* (Gen.15:2), like the *Shekinah*, a pillar of fire in the desert and *"that day the Lord made, karath berith, i.e. cut a Covenant with Abram"* (Gen.15:2).

Abraham is the model of a believer. He trusted in God even when the odds were against him. Such is faith, believing that *"the Lord is my light and my help"* (Ps.26:1).

The psalmist, like Abraham, follows the Lord. *"It is your face, O Lord, that I seek"* (Ps.26:8). It expresses *"Hope in the Lord"* (Ps.26:14) and confidently states *"I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living"* (Ps.26:13).

Paul also has a divine experience. Having met the Son of God, he walks a new life of faith in a new covenant. In Christ, he confidently states that *"For us, our homeland is in heaven"* (Phil.3:20).

As the apostles saw the transfiguration of Christ on the mountain, such is our destiny *"he will transfigure our bodies into copies of his glorious body"* (Phil.3:21).

The Gospel portrays the apostolic experience of the glory of God. They witnessed how *"the aspect of Jesus' face changed and there were Moses and Elijah appearing in glory"* (Lk.9:30).

The apostles were passive recipients of grace, barely able to stand on their own feet, *"they were heavy with sleep"* (Lk.9:32), as was Abraham in the covenant of God.

Even as they attempt a reaction, they are overawed and *"a voice came from the cloud saying, "This is my Son, the Chosen One"* (Lk.9:35). The Christian response is to *"Listen to him"* (Lk.9:35).

Read the **Gospel** and reflect upon on the Transfiguration on the mount (Lk.9:28-36).

Where do faithful today experience a transformation of the glorious Lord? (Eucharist)

Teaching of the Church is on the mysteries of the transformations of Christ, in his resurrection, in his sacraments, and in his people.

Witness to the transfiguration of your sinful self into a living member of the Body of Christ.

FOR THE CHILDREN

Share the Gospel text on the Transfiguration of Jesus, with the children (Lk.9:28-36).

Discuss where a transformation of Christ happens today. See the mystery of the Eucharist.

Give the Teaching of the Church on the mystery of the Blessed Sacrament.

Consider ways of how we can transform ourselves more into the likeness of Christ. (Witness)

FOR TEENAGERS (*Shared Christian Praxis*)

Name the Present Action: *What does the Transfiguration of Christ mean to you?*

Your Story and Vision: *What are your moments of transformation?*

Church's Story and Vision: *Give story of Church, highlighting some of its transformations.*

Yours and Church's Vision: *How would you envisage changes in yourself and in the Church, for the future and for the building of the Kingdom?*

RCIA:

The **Transfiguration** discloses Jesus' divine glory. It meant **"to strengthen the apostles' faith in anticipation of his Passion,"** (CCC. #568). The apostles become aware that the path to glory follows the way of the cross. Moses and Elijah, in the apparition, represent the Law and the prophets, witnessing the coming of the Messiah.

The apparition also reveals the Blessed Trinity, i.e. **"the Father in the voice; the Son in the man; the Spirit in the shining cloud"** (CCC. #555).

N.B: CCC: "THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH". Paulines - Mambo Press, Nairobi, Kenya. 1992.

LIFE EXPERIENCE

Recently, I had a number of Jewish experiences. With regards to Modern Hebrew, I have an Israeli friend who is also interested in South Africa. Then there is my cousin's son who is married to a Jewess and raising his family in Israel. Modern Hebrew is reasonably close to ancient Hebrew (Biblical), with some adaptations. 'Computer,' for example, is **מחשב**, *mahshev*. It derives from the common Hebrew word **חשב**, *hoshev*, meaning 'to think, reckon, count, calculate and compute. Hence the Hebrew word 'mahshev' for computer. Interestingly, the first reading today, uses the word 'hoshev' when it says that **"Abram put his faith in the Lord, who counted (hoshev) this as making him justified"** (Gen. 15:6).

N.B: In 'hoshev', the *h* sound is similar to Afrikaans 'g', or 'ch' in German 'ach' and Scottish 'loch'.

LITTLE ANGELINA

I wrote Angelina's name in Hebrew. She could not read it and complained, saying "Give me back my name." I had not taken it away but merely translated it. What's in a name. It expresses one's identity. Little Angelina felt threatened in changing her name. There are instances in the bible where people's name change, such as Abraham's; and God himself is called by different names. Ancient wisdom tells us **"It is not the name we really want to know but the person."**⁽ⁱ⁾

(i) **UPANISHADS.** *Translat.* Juan **Mascaro:** "Kaushitaki Upanishad" 3.8. Penguin, Aylesbury, UK. 1965. p.107

IMPORTANT WORD: **"Cutting a Covenant"** (Gen. 15:10) **כרת ברית** (*karath berith*)

Interestingly, the common Hebrew expression for making a covenant is **כרת ברית** (*karath berith*), meaning 'to cut a covenant.' It signifies the ancient biblical way of how it was done. The sacrificial animals were *karath*, cut in half, and the covenanters walked between the halves, sealing a *berith*, agreement. This is portrayed in *Genesis 15:18*, but here Abraham is in **"a deep sleep"** and God alone, as a burning furnace, walks between. In this way God binds himself unilaterally in offering Abraham a fruitful future. Abraham's role is the humble recipient, a man of faith trusting in the fulfillment of God's promises. The **"deep sleep, and terror that seized him"** (Gen. 15:2), is like the darkness of death from which he awakens to a new life and covenant with God.

In same way, it is Jesus who makes the sacrifice and we have to believe in him.

Watchword: “*That day the Lord made a Covenant with Abram*” (Gen.15:18)

Hebrew: ביום ההוא כרת יחוא את־אברם ברית

Bayom hahu' karath Yahweh eth - 'Abram berith.

Greek: Εν ημερα εκεινη διεθετο Κυριος τω Αβραμ διαθηκην.

En hemera ekeine dietheto Kurios to Abram diatheken.

Latin: In die illo pepigit Dominus cum Abram foedus.

Spanish: En aquel dia el SEÑOR hizo un pacto con Abram.

Portuguese: *Naquele mesmo dia, fez o SENHOR um concerto com Abrão.*

French: Ce jour-la le Seigneur conclut une alliance avec Abram.

German: An dem Tage schloss der Herr einen Bund mit Abram.

Afrikaans: Op daardie day het die Here 'n verbund gesluit met Abram.

Zulu: Ngalolosuku uNkulunkulu wenza isivumelwano noAbram.

Xhosa: Waza ke uNdikhoyo wathi kuAbram esenza umnqophiso.

Sotho: Ka lona tsatsi leo Modimo a etsa selekane le Aborame.

Irish: Rinne and Tiarna conradh le hAbram an la sin.