



a Kendall Hunt Company

Second Sunday of Lent, Year A, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session read all the readings.

Genesis 12:1-4

Psalm 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22

2 Timothy 1:8-10

Matthew 17:1-9

Spend a few minutes reflecting of what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading which appealed to you? Was there a word or image that engaged you?

Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need for the session.

Word in Liturgy

Each year on the second Sunday of Lent, the Church begins the Liturgy of the Word with the story of Abraham's call, a call to holiness in which countless generations of believers have recognized the contours of their own call. Chapter 12 of Genesis marks a turning point, not only in the literary structure of the Book of Genesis, but in the whole story of salvation. After eleven chapters dealing with human sinfulness and rebellion, the patriarchal history begins here with a stark summary of God's initiative on Abraham's (and our) behalf: A call and a promise, a mission and a blessing are what God offers. Abraham's call is to holiness, a life lived in covenanted relationship with the Lord; Abraham's blessing is holiness, the faithful promise of the Lord that he will be given immortality in his progeny. The terse phrase, "Abram went as the Lord directed him," is epigrammatic of the entire saga of tested and proven fidelity on Abraham's part that will be told in the succeeding chapters. As such, it is also a wonderful summary of the essence of holiness—living as the Lord directs us.

In all three years of the liturgical cycle, the gospel reading on this day is that of the transfiguration of Jesus. The previous readings have already provided the key to understanding this text in light of our Lenten pilgrimage. Jesus, his divinity revealed in splendor on the mountaintop, offers to his disciples (ourselves included) a glimpse of the promised glory that awaits all who share his life in baptism. The Church invites us to gaze on our promised destiny today, so that the rigors of the Lenten season—indeed, the rigors of discipleship—will not lead to discouragement. Abraham's call led to trials. And at the end of

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Matthew's account of the transfiguration, Jesus warns of his impending death. The path to holiness passes through the refining fires of suffering, and so today we are reassured that the promise is firm and will surely lead to fullness of glory with Christ.

Catholic Doctrine

Christ, Our Hope of Glory

God alone is holy. And yet, humans can participate in the holiness of God. The path to sanctification ("to make holy") in a believer's life begins with awe. The human creature realizes there is a "Greater One," the Creator. Even though this leads to the realization of one's unworthiness, a simultaneous sense of attraction to the positive, to God's glory, is experienced. In this gospel passage depicting the transfiguration, the disciples fall forward, hiding their faces, in awe of the divine manifestation. At the same time, the experience is a positive one, leading Peter to exclaim how good it is.

Much has been written in the scriptures about the holiness of God and our participation in or striving toward that holiness. Theologians in the early Church also contributed to an understanding of what was variously called sanctification in the western tradition or deification in the eastern tradition. The Second Vatican Council made it very clear that not only priests and religious are called to sanctity, but all—whatever their vocation or station in life—should strive toward holiness by a continued participation in the sacramental life of the Church and in its mission.

Thus, all Christians, no matter their station or their walk of life, are challenged to heed the divine voice and accept the good news to "get up," to cast off fear and conform their lives to Christ, God's beloved Son (Matthew 17:1-9). The transforming effect of God's grace enables this sanctification or holiness in the lives of believers.

Yet the Christian path to holiness and progress toward perfection is marked by struggle (CCC 2015). The allure of sin, the seductions of Satan, must be fought and the way of self-sacrifice (the cross) must be embraced. In that spiritual battle, the disciple of Jesus takes heart in knowing that Christ has led the way in rejecting the kingdom of darkness and has paid the price for us in advance.