

Homily 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent Cycle B: 2024: Gen 22: 1-2, 9. 10-13, 15-18; Ps. 116; Rom 8:31-34;  
Mk. 9: 2-10

***“Holy Memories to Keep Us on Track and Help Us to Grow Closer to God”***

1. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent, we always hear of the event of **the Transfiguration** in Matthew, Mark or Luke. This is when Jesus shows the 3 chosen Apostles: Peter, James and John His true nature as the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Blessed Trinity and the eternal Son of God. **His divinity shines through His humanity: the only time prior to His Resurrection that He allows this to occur.** Why does Jesus do this? To deepen the Apostles Faith as well as our own. He knows they are going to need **this holy memory** to keep them focused, when He is soon going to undergo His horrible Passion and Death to redeem the human race from its many sins. It will be something that will rock their Faith and it can do the same for us - if we are not careful. Those of us living now have the advantage of knowing the whole narrative of what happened to Jesus; the Apostles at that time did not. The Transfiguration is also to bear witness to the fact that He is God’s Eternal Son and we need to listen to Him as Our Heavenly Father reminds the 3 chosen Apostles and us. It flows from this reality, that now Jesus speaks to us through our Catholic Faith, and so we are motivated to keep the teachings of the Faith not to just do it in a legalistic way, but to do it out of love for the Lord, who set up the Catholic Church as the Ark of Salvation for the whole human race, and whoever is willing to listen can receive the gift of the Faith. We need to pray for all those who do not have the Faith right now, or have turned away from it for whatever reason to come back before it is too late.
2. **Holy Memories:** The Transfiguration is not just an essential moment in the public ministry stage of Jesus’s earthly life. It is also, as I said above, a holy memory to help the Apostles and us - when our Faith can grow weak under the burdens and confusing events of our earthly life. St. Peter points this out later, when Jesus has already ascended into Heaven, and St. Peter is the 1st Pope, and the Church is being severely persecuted by the Roman authorities at the time, so St. Peter says in his 1<sup>st</sup> letter in the NT: *It was not by way of cleverly concocted myths that we taught you about the coming in power of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we were eyewitnesses of His sovereign majesty. He received glory and praise from God the Father when that unique declaration came to Him out of the*

majestic splendor: *‘This is my beloved Son, on whom my favor rests.’ We ourselves heard this said from Heaven while we were on the holy mountain. Besides, we possess the prophetic message as something altogether reliable. Keep your attention fixed on it, as you would on a lamp shining in a dark place until the first streaks of dawn appear and the morning star rises in your hearts (2 Pet 1: 16-19).* **How essential it is in the spiritual life to have holy memories of how God has worked in the past in our lives, to help us stay spiritually focused during present trials.** To cite a few examples, a couple is having some interpersonal struggles in their marriage a few years in, and the temptation is to “throw in the towel”; when if only they can recall why the Lord called them to get married in the first place, and take that holy memory to prayer, and even counseling, if need be, so to remember the Lord wants this marriage to be beautiful and holy and will give them the grace for it. Same thing as a priest, when we priests are facing serious temptations or earthly failures, it is so easily to forget that God called us, way back when, to be one of His priests and promised at our ordination to give us the graces to grow in faithfulness and holiness. The same thing goes for single people or widows/widowers. All of us who are serious about the spiritual life are given singular or special graces by God, at least occasionally where He makes things very clear, to help us remember how much He loves us and wants to help us; the same thing goes for our Lady. Also, when we are battling temptations of various sorts, sometimes the Lord or Our Lady intervenes in a way that is beyond human explanation; we need to remember those special times as the devil tries to get us to forget those special graces even a day or two after they happen!

3. **Confidence in God:** The Lord tells the saints, the thing that keeps us from growing spiritually, along with deliberate sin, is the lack of Confidence in Him. Not in ourselves! In Him! Peter learned that lesson the hard way; later in life after maturing spiritually, he says the following: *“There is a cause for rejoicing here. You may for a time have to suffer the distress of many trials: but this is so that your faith, which is more precious than the passing splendor of fire-tried gold, may by its genuineness lead to praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ appears. Although you have never seen Him, you love Him, and without seeing now believe in Him, and rejoice with inexpressible joy touched with glory because you are achieving faith’s goal, your salvation (1 Pet 1: 6-8).* God bless you.✠