

The Old Testament: Exodus 34:29-35

Reader: A Reading from the Book of Exodus.

Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; but whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Epistle: II Corinthians 3:12–4:2

Reader: A Reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Holy Gospel: Luke 9:28-43a

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen. In the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. Just then a man from the crowd shouted, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child. Suddenly a spirit seizes him, and all at once he shrieks. It convulses him until he foams at the mouth; it mauls him and will scarcely leave him. I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.” Jesus answered, “You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.” While he was coming, the demon dashed him to the ground in convulsions. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit,

healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. And all were astounded at the greatness of God.

Psalm 99

- 1 The Lord is King;
let the people tremble; *
 he is enthroned upon the cherubim;
 let the earth shake.

- 2 The Lord is great in Zion; *
 he is high above all peoples.

- 3 Let them confess his Name, which is great and awesome; *
 he is the Holy One.

- 4 “O mighty King, lover of justice,
you have established equity; *
 you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.”

- 5 Proclaim the greatness of the Lord our God
and fall down before his footstool; *
 he is the Holy One.

- 6 Moses and Aaron among his priests,
and Samuel among those who call upon his Name, *
 they called upon the Lord, and he answered them.

- 7 He spoke to them out of the pillar of cloud; *
 they kept his testimonies and the decree that he gave them.

- 8 “O Lord our God, you answered them indeed; *
 you were a God who forgave them,
 yet punished them for their evil deeds.”

- 9 Proclaim the greatness of the Lord our God
and worship him upon his holy hill; *

for the Lord our God is the Holy One.

The Last Sunday after the Epiphany—Year C

Welcome to our church. On this final Sunday before Lent, the Epiphany theme of the manifestation of Jesus as the Son of God ends with the account of the most striking manifestation of all, prior to the Resurrection. The transfiguration of Christ was the turning point in his ministry, and for this reason, it comes at this turning point in the Church's year.

In today's Gospel reading, we are told that the conversation between Jesus and Moses and Elijah concerned his departure (in Greek, "exodus"), which he was to perform in Jerusalem. Luke's use of exodus reminds us of the close relationship in meaning as well as in time between Passover and the dying and rising of Jesus. Luke also tells us a few verses later that it was at this point that he "set his face to go up to Jerusalem," to his certain death. So today we set our faces to go through Lent and Good Friday in order to arrive at Easter.

The Old Testament reading gives us a parallel event in the life of Moses. In his encounters with God during his leadership of Israel, Moses' face was transfigured. The light of God shone forth from him. Starting with that story, Paul, in our second reading, describes the process of our growth in grace and one of gradually being transfigured into the image and likeness of Christ.

Today is traditionally the last Sunday we use "Alleluia" until Easter. It is not that we give up rejoicing, but rather that do this so that the restoration of its use at Easter will be a dramatic sign of Easter's newness. We now move to our Lenten pilgrimage looking toward the ultimate transfiguration of all people in the eternal Easter.

From *The Rite Light: Reflections on the Sunday Readings and Seasons of the Church Year*. Copyright © 2007 by Michael W. Merriman. Church Publishing Incorporated, New York.