

# Second Sunday of Lent

## Christian Call to a transfigured life with Christ by erecting "The Tent" of new hope and livelihoods for our brothers and sisters

Special Theme for the 2nd Sunday

8 March, 2020

**1st Reading: Genesis 12:1-4**  
**2nd Reading: Timothy 1:8-10**  
**Gospel Reading: Matthew 17:1-9**

### Mass Introduction

Today as we observe the second Sunday of Lent, we focus on the Christian Call to lead a renewed and transfigured life with Christ by erecting "The Tent" of new hope and livelihoods.

Today's Readings exhorts us to embrace the power of God and go beyond our commitments to journey into new territories and new promises that lead to new lives and livelihood. God's calling to Abraham reminds us that we too are blessed with the remarkable gift of life and are called by the Lord to be a blessing to those in need around us. Like Abraham, all that is required of us is to "go" as the Lord asks.

The Gospel Reading on the Transfiguration shows how much God loves both Jesus and us, and it serves as a model and reminder that God is always at work to prepare us for the difficulties that we will face in life.

The transfiguration is also a story of hope and awe that showed the disciples something positive about the future and gave them hope for all that was to come. We are reminded and called to be transfigured with Christ, to bear witness to him in the world. God continues to show His glory, let us be open to his calling in this season of lent.

### Homily

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

The Season of Lent is a time of Grace where we acknowledge before God our shortcoming in spite of His overwhelming

love for us revealed through the paschal mystery of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ. Pope Francis reminds us that 'we should not pass the Lenten season of grace in vain, but to live as children of God acknowledging and obeying His law, in particular in regard to our brothers and sisters and to creation (Lenten Message 2019). Hence, through our meaningful Lenten observances let us prepare ourselves to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed.

The first reading from the book of Genesis (12,1-4) marks the promise of blessings given to Abraham our Father in Faith and his family. This promise of God demands from the part of Abraham complete obedience and surrender to the will of God. God's words to Abraham begin with a command, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you (12, 1) was a demand to sever his ties with his roots, family ties, and all important relationships he was relying upon. God demands from Abraham absolute loyalty and commitment to His Commandment of total surrender and wholehearted obedience.

In Genesis 1-11 we see the story of rebellious and corrupt humanity beginning with the fall of man at Eden in the creation episode. The narratives of Abel, Noah and the flood and the tower of Babel described in these chapters also focus on the repeated disobedience, unfaithfulness, rebellious and violent nature of humanity worsened through the committing of sins and disobedience to the word of God.

The promise of God to Abraham marks the dramatic transition in the history of Salvation. It was a promise that he would become the father of a large nation. 'I will make of you a

great nation and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves (Gen. 12, 2-3). This is the way God makes his promises to Abraham in clear terms about the brighter future that awaits Abraham and his progeny, and we see that this promise is fulfilled in the subsequent chapters.

The response of Abraham was the most remarkable aspect as he believed the promise of God and did what God wanted of him. Romans 4:18-21 describes this unwavering faith of Abraham: "Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become 'the father of many nations,' according to what was said, 'So numerous shall your descendants be.'

In the second reading from the second letter to Timothy (1, 8-18) Apostle Paul encourages Timothy to be brave and be confirmed in his call. Paul reminds his dear friend Timothy that the Spirit of God grants Christian the spiritual power. As the result, he will be empowered to take up sufferings for the sake of Gospel and associate himself with the sufferings of the persecuted brothers and sisters.

In the gospel passage from Mathew 17, 1-9 the disciples see Jesus revealing himself in all his divine glory as he was transfigured before them in the mount of Tabor. As Pope Francis puts it "the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain was a prelude to his passion in Jerusalem." Pope Francis explained that "the transfiguration helps the disciples and us too, to understand that the passion of Christ is a mystery of suffering, but it is above all a gift of infinite love on the part of Jesus. The event of Jesus transfiguring on the mountain makes us understand better also his resurrection." (Angelus 25th February 2018).

Lent is a season when we climb up with Jesus on the mountain of God and to stop with Him, to be more attentive to the voice of God and to allow oneself to be enveloped

and transformed by the Spirit. The voice of God the Father resounding from the cloud has an important message to convey to us – 'Listen to him' (v.5). Listen to him means be warmed by His Love, taught by His Words and be Transformed with Him.

On the mountain of Transfiguration, Peter repeats his error of responding too quickly and thinking too little. He was taken up by the glory which he witnessed. He was so dazzled by the sight of transfiguration and the presence of Moses and Elijah there. He was still speaking a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, listen to him." (V.5) Listen to him is an invitation in the season of Lent to get into the mood of prayer where we listen to God more attentively and follow him more intimately.

Reflecting on the account of the Transfiguration of Jesus on the mount Pope Francis again brings to our notice two elements of prayer life summed up in two words: ascent and descent. We need to ascend the mountain of the Lord and stand in the presence of the Lord to find ourselves and better perceive the voice of the Lord. This we do in prayer. But we cannot stay there. Encounter with God in prayer inspires us anew to "descend the mountain" and return to the plain where we meet our brothers weighed down by fatigue, sickness, injustice, ignorance, poverty both material and spiritual.

In Hebrews 11, 8-9 we read 'By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.' Abraham's encounter with God radically changes his life. He set out a journey to fulfill God's promise to him. God changes his name to indicate God's ownership and Abraham's commitment to God. Jesus' Transfiguration prefigured what Christ's own self-surrender would mean: after the cross there would be

a return to Glory. Glory awaits when we too surrender fully to the Lord. Peter acknowledged Jesus as the Christ through his words (Mathew 16, 16) and this has happened immediately before the transfiguration.

Following Jesus through our way of life is not so easy which would demand the surrendering to the will of God and embracing a path radically new. Jesus' transfiguration also offers "the Tent" of new hopes and meaning to our sisters and brothers who seek new life and livelihoods. May this season of Lent open up our hearts to our sisters and brothers who are in need of our support for brightening their life and livelihoods.

(This homily was prepared by Fr. Jaison Vadassery, Secretary, CBCI Office for Labor)

**Prayer of the Faithful:**

**Celebrant:** God revealed to us His divine Son in His glory and He invites us to listen to Him. As we strive to follow Jesus 'example of humility and service, we ask God to bless us as we place our prayers before Him.

**Response: Lord, help us to place our hope in you**

1. For Pope Francis and all leaders of the Church that they may have God's special graces to be courageous and be obedient to His callings. May they continue to guide and lead people as one flock for His Glory and blessings.

**We Pray to the Lord. R/-**

2. For the laity that we may appreciate the precious gift of life and all the blessings that we receive. May we be inspired to embrace His teachings and reach out to the less fortunate for sustenance and upliftment of their lives.

**We Pray to the Lord. R/-**

3. That those working tirelessly in challenging circumstances remain motivated despite the difficulties and continue to build God's "Tents" within communities bringing new hope, new

lives and creating opportunities for livelihood.

**We Pray to the Lord. R/-**

4. For the sick and needy that they do not lose hope and may find solace in their lives amidst the hardships.

**We Pray to the Lord. R/-**

5. That during this Lenten Season, we are inspired to look within and desist from all thoughts and deeds that lessens the dignity of our lives and others. May each one of us listen to the Christian call and be inspired to renew and transfigure oneself with Christ.

**We pray to the Lord. R/-**

**Celebrant:** Loving Father, the season of Lent is your generous gift to us. Renew us in spirit, purify our hearts and help us to serve you and our brothers and sisters in freedom. Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

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**Fasting**, that is, learning to change our attitude towards others and all of creation, turning away from the temptation to "devour" everything to satisfy our voracity and being ready to suffer for love, which can fill the emptiness of our hearts.

**Prayer**, which teaches us to abandon idolatry and the self-sufficiency of our ego, and to acknowledge our need of the Lord and his mercy.

**Almsgiving**, whereby we escape from the insanity of hoarding everything for ourselves in the illusory belief that we can secure a future that does not belong to us.

Let us leave behind our selfishness and self-absorption and turn to Jesus' Pasch. Let us stand beside our brothers and sisters in need, sharing our spiritual and material goods with them.

MESSAGE OF  
HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR LENT 2019



# Sustain | Sustainable Life | Livelihood

समृद्ध जीवन: सतत आजीविका

**C**aritas India, through its annual Lenten Campaign 2020, focussing on the theme – Sustain Life: Sustainable Livelihood invites everyone to join hands and come together to be a catalyst – a change agent - to adopt “Each one Help one” approach in reaching out to attain a sustainable livelihood.

Let us pledge during this Lenten Season to contribute (financially/non-financially) towards enabling a sustained life. This doesn't only mean poverty eradication, but also building the capacity and capabilities of others to withstand the trends and the shocks. It also means that all of us start living our lives with a sustainable approach – by sustainable use of natural resource, reducing carbon emissions by using eco-friendly methods of traveling, reducing/recycling the waste products, enabling community-led initiatives.