

Missionary Commentary

Second Sunday of Lent
March 16, 2025

Sunday Readings

Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18
Psalm 27:1, 7-9, 13-14
Philippians 3:17-4:1 or 3:20-4:1
Luke 9:28b-36

[USCCB Link to the Readings](#)

Hold the Light Closer

During the dictatorship in Chile (1973-1990), squads of militarized police would beat young protestors--passionate in their commitment to return the country to democracy—and leave them barely recognizable.

At first-aid stations set up in our chapels, I would hold a desk lamp over their scalps, while a volunteer medical student sutured up the wounds—and feel myself growing dizzy from the shocking sights. Somehow, I learned to keep myself from falling over in a faint by periodically averting my gaze while sustaining the light for the attending student.

In the Introduction to the Synod on Synodality's Final Document (paragraph 2), from last October, a reference is made to where Christ can be gazed upon today, and the Synod participants did not look away:

“We have seen the mark of His wounds transfigured by a new life, yet engraved forever in His humanity,” the Synod members wrote. “These are wounds that continue to bleed in the bodies of many brothers and sisters, including as a result of our own actions. Looking upon the Lord does not distance us from the tragedies of history. Instead, it opens our eyes to the suffering of those around us, and we are pierced: the faces of war-stricken terrorized children, weeping mothers, the shattered dreams of so many young people, refugees who face terrible journeys, the victims of climate change and social injustice.”

As we head further towards Holy Week, in this time of repentance and renewal, may God help us to be transfigured by becoming “conformed to Christ”—as St. Paul describes our growing unity with Christ--and attending to the vulnerable and hurt of our time, holding a lamp of solidarity over them, and keeping ourselves from being overwhelmed by fear or horror by focusing, in a radical, Christlike way, upon God's graced and loving support.

next page

continued from previous page

Notes on the Sunday Readings

First Reading — Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18

Ancient accounts here relate how Abraham's trust wins God's favor, and he is thus promised an heir, and land. A traditional covenant ritual to 'seal the deal' follows. Abraham's stellar number of descendants will eventually include the spiritual families of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the "Abrahamic Religions."

Responsorial Psalm — Psalm 27: 1, 7-9, 13-14

An initial declaration of trust is followed by a prayer for help, and the psalm ends as it began, with references to life. There is a final poetic mention of the Temple as the "land of the living"—just as many places of worship are for people seeking refuge today.

Second Reading — Philippians 3:17-4:1 or 3:20-4:1

Paul writes from prison to his favorite community, "my joy and crown", and urges them to imitate his example of "conformity" to Christ—that is, of being absorbed into Christ's death and resurrection, and letting that central mystery shine forth in one's life.

Gospel — Luke 9:28b-36

The presence of Moses and Elijah confirms Jesus' identity as prophet, but God's voice from heaven corrects Peter (who proposes to build three tents for three equally important messengers), confirming instead that only Jesus is God's Son, to be listened to.

*Notes and commentary by Fr. Bob Mosher,
a member of the [Missionary Society of Saint Columban](#).*

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