

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius
A sermon preached by Father Bradford on The Second Sunday of Lent
March 1, 2015

+

At the beginning of Lent Holy Church tells us about the temptation which befell Our Lord Jesus, and which awaits anyone setting out to do the Lord's work. There is more! Today we are reminded of where the journey will take us. Jesus brought three neophyte apostles up the mountain in order to reconcile them to His Passion. The apostles were to lose any notions of an earthly kingdom but also what they would gain by their own passions.

What were they all thinking as their silent Friend and Master led them up Mt Tabor? There had been *another* silent mountain climb famous in Israel's history. Abraham had taken his son Isaac to Mount Moriah, which is believed to be today's temple mount in Jerusalem. It is no coincidence that Holy Mother Church gives us Genesis 22 as a lesson on the *same Sunday* as the incident of the Transfiguration.

We know what young Isaac was thinking. Scripture records his question and his father Abraham's answer that God would provide everything for the sacrifice. Perhaps Peter, James, and John recalled the Genesis story as they silently climbed Mt Tabor behind the Lord Jesus. Poor Isaac had known nothing of the terrible things God sometimes asks of the people who love Him. *But Abraham knew*. And only later would the apostles know the dreadful significance of what their Master was doing. *But Jesus knew*. No wonder both the old patriarch and the young God Incarnate were silent as they trudged up the hill followed by their innocent but trusting and loving companions!

Words fail to describe the Transfiguration. But we have to use words. The words Peter, James, and John used we later called *Holy Scriptures*. We call them that because *God is in them*. And because God is in them the things they describe ring true in our souls. Taking nothing away from the events of Holy Week, for the apostles, the experience of the Transfiguration would be the great frame of reference and template against which both their thanksgivings and their confessions would be measured for the rest of their earthly lives.

But the Transfiguration was not a once only and sorry-if-you-weren't there event! In another place the Lord Jesus said, "There are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the rule of God come with power." That Divine

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius
A sermon preached by Father Bradford on The Second Sunday of Lent
March 1, 2015

+

prediction applies to you and me and to anyone whose life of fidelity and conformity to the Gospel allows them to see marvels of conversion, marvels of generosity in unexplainable circumstances, sacrificial service to others, and submissions to God's will we might otherwise not recognize or think possible.

The glory of Christ's Presence can break through in His sacraments just as it did in His Incarnate Body on Mt. Tabor. The invitation to walk with the Lord can come at any time. It is usually unexpected by us and certainly *unplanned* by us. And our prayer must be we will have grace to respond. We must pray for that grace constantly because scripture is full of stories of *missed opportunities* to go with Christ.

So they went both of them together: Abraham and Isaac. Later the inner group of friends of God expanded to include Peter, James, and John going with the Lord. The scriptures tell of their experience. But the Gospel is not the story of *other* people. How would that be good news? It is good news because Our Gracious Master has provided the way for you and me to go with Him. And when we do, and remembering the glory, we will nevertheless have to return to serving Christ in the world. With Peter and the rest we will find satisfaction in the remainder of our days, knowing Christ is also with us in our fidelity and conformity to His will each and every day. But having once experienced the glory, we will never again call *any* day ordinary!