



Second Sunday of Lent † Sunday 17th March 2019

In England and Wales

Cycle of Prayer – Candidates for the Sacraments, Penitents and Wanderers
Keynote: Called to walk in faith in the presence of God

Book of Genesis 15: 5-12, 17-18

The word of the Lord comes to Abram. *‘Taking Abram outside the Lord said, “Look up to heaven and count the stars if you can. Such will be your descendants”... Abram put his faith in the Lord, who counted this as making him justified.’* We can share Abram’s wonder when we look at the night sky. God in recognition of Abram’s personal trust and fidelity makes two promises to him: *‘Look up to heaven and count the stars if you can. Such will be your descendants.’* The second promise is that Abram will inherit a land for himself and for his family and his descendants after him. In the evening, Abram experiences the overwhelming presence of God, and as terror seizes him Abram falls into a deep sleep. So *‘That day the Lord made a covenant with Abram’.* Christians revere this ancient figure of Abram; his personal example of faith is also the occasion of a personal sign of God’s fidelity and God’s eternal promise to his People. We refer in one of the Eucharistic Prayers to *‘Abraham our father in faith.’* Oh! That we had that same overwhelming sense of the presence of God! Take a moment to look at the night sky and the beauty of the world around us, and just give thanks.

Responsorial Psalm 26 (27) – A triumphant song of trust in God

Letter of Paul to the Philippians 3: 17- 4: 1

This passage is also about faith, the reading speaks about fidelity to the Christian gospel – the way of life to which we’ve been called. Paul was very aware that some Christians had stopped practising their faith or turned away from Christ, now he urges the converts to remain faithful in the Lord. *‘Be united in following my rule of life... I have told you often... there are many who are behaving as the enemies of the cross of Christ... For us, our homeland is in heaven, and from heaven comes the saviour we are waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours... so then, my dear friends, do not give way but remain faithful in the Lord.’* If the way is hard, we have the example of *‘Abraham our father in faith’*, and the inspiration of the gospel today to guide our steps.

Gospel according to Luke 9: 28-36

Significantly, Luke tells us that the Transfiguration of Jesus took place while Jesus was at prayer, and immediately following the first prediction of his forthcoming passion, which is to take place in Jerusalem. So the disciples witness *‘Moses and Elijah appearing in glory, and they were speaking of his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem.’* The apostle Peter doesn’t readily understand the meaning of what is being said, but the reference to Jesus’ passing, refers to a personal ‘exodus’, his death. So God commands the disciples, *‘This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him.’* Alone once more with Jesus *‘The disciples’*, Luke tells us, *‘kept silence and, at the time, told no one what they had seen.’* Maybe, like Abraham they were overawed by the presence of God, as well might we be. Is that phrase in Luke’s account: *‘keeping silence’* an invitation to ponder in our own hearts and to pray about the meaning of this event in our lives today?