

Second Sunday of Lent Year C
Gn 15:5-12, 17-18; Ps 27; Phil 3:17-4:1; Lk 9:28b-36

In this second Sunday of Lent, the Church proposes to us a continuation of the meditations we began last Sunday: reflection on the journey from the “Old Testament” to the New, a journey which is called the Exodus (going out from slavery –or “Exile”– into the freedom of the children of God, Gal 5:1).

The first reading is redolent of antiquity (evokes really old times). Abraham, our father in faith (Rom 4:16), hopes for offspring and land. He believes in God who called him out of Babylon (“Ur of the Chaldeans”) to a place he knew not of. He is at a loss to understand how he will leave posterity, but he believes God’s promise. Abraham offers a sacrifice of various animals and God, after a reference to four hundred years of exile, makes a covenant with Abraham. But it is only to his “seed” (descendants) that the promise of the Land is made. Gal 3:16 understands the “seed” to be Christ.

The gospel reading is from Luke, particularly apt here. We are familiar with the Transfiguration. It is as if Jesus’ closest disciples get to see a glimpse of the glory that will be Jesus’ after his Passion (see Lk 24:26). The Jewish Bible (basically, our “Old Testament”) consisted of the “Law and the Prophets” (a third section is called the “Psalms” in Lk 24:44). Moses represented the Law, the first five books also called the Torah. Elijah represented the “Prophets,” divided into the “Former Prophets” (Joshua, Judges Samuel and Kings) and the “Latter Prophets” (Isaiah, Jeremiah Ezekiel and the Twelve). So the whole of Scripture as known to the Jews at the time is as it were speaking with and about Jesus and witnessing to him (valid testimony required two witnesses (Dt 17:6; Mt 18:16). But what does Luke tell us is the subject of the conversation? Here the NAB translation, the one we use at Mass, is one of the few that gets it right (joined now by the New Vulgate). What Moses and Elijah are speaking with Jesus about is “his *exodus*, which he was about to fulfill in Jerusalem.” From modest beginnings regarding the promise of some land and offspring to survive Abram, we reach up to Jesus, the one who truly made the Exodus from Exile to God’s very Presence (Heb 9:12, 24; 10:19-20).