

## FIRST READING – C LENT 2

A reading from the book of Genesis.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

The Lord said to Abram,  
“Look toward heaven and count the stars,  
if you are able to count them.”  
Then he said to him,  
“So shall your descendants be.”  
And he believed the Lord;  
and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.  
Then the Lord said to Abram,  
“I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans,  
to give you this land to possess.”  
But Abram said,  
“O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?”  
The Lord said to him,  
“Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old,  
a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”  
Abram brought the Lord all these and cut them in two,  
laying each half over against the other;  
but he did not cut the birds in two.  
And when birds of prey came down to eat the animals,  
Abram drove them away.  
As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram,  
and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him.  
When the sun had gone down and it was dark,  
a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.  
On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying,  
“To your descendants I give this land,  
from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.”

Ur = UHR

Chaldeans = kal-DEE-uhns

Euphrates = you-FRAY-teez



PAUSE for **THREE** seconds  
then look up at the people  
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

## SECOND READING – C LENT 2

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Brothers and sisters,  
join in imitating me,  
and observe those who live according to the example you have in us.  
For many live as enemies of the Cross of Christ;  
I have often told you of them,  
and now I tell you even with tears.  
Their end is destruction; their god is the belly;  
and their glory is in their shame;  
their minds are set on earthly things.  
But our citizenship is in heaven,  
and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour,  
the Lord Jesus Christ.  
He will transform the body of our humiliation  
that it may be conformed to the body of his glory,  
by the power that also enables him  
to make all things subject to himself.  
Therefore, my brothers and sisters,  
whom I love and long for,  
my joy and crown,  
stand firm, my beloved, in the Lord in this way.



Pause for **THREE** seconds  
then look up at the people  
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

## GOSPEL READING – C LENT 2

The Lord be with you.

*And with your spirit.*

A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

*Glory to you, O Lord.*

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James,  
and went up on the mountain to pray.  
And while he was praying,  
the appearance of his face changed,  
and his clothes became dazzling white.  
Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to Jesus.  
They appeared in glory and were speaking of his exodus,  
which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.  
Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep;  
but since they had stayed awake,  
they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.  
Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus,  
“Master, it is good for us to be here;  
let us make three dwellings,  
one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”  
Peter did not know what he was saying.  
While he was saying this,  
a cloud came and overshadowed them;  
and they were terrified as they entered the cloud.  
Then from the cloud came a voice that said,  
“This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!”  
When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone.  
And the disciples kept silent  
and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

### Reading I: Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18

This reading combines three different themes: YHWH's promise of an abundant posterity to Abraham; his promise of the land to Israel; and the sealing of that promise with a covenant ceremony.

The Book of Genesis contains several stories of God's establishment of his covenant with Abraham, all of them variants of the same tradition.

In Abraham, God decisively intervened in human history to create a people for himself. God's choice is, on his side, a sheer act of grace; and faith is set, be it noted, not in the context of individual salvation, but in the context of a people's history.

This is the context in which the Old Testament views *sola gratia, sola fide*.

The apostle Paul discerned the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham in the Christ-event and in the emergence of the new Israel, the Church (Gal 3; Rom 4).

### Responsorial Psalm: 27:1, 7-8, 8-9, 13-14

This psalm serves as a link between the first two readings. The fourth stanza begins with the words: "I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!"

For Abraham this land was *eretz Israel*, the territory that his descendants were destined to occupy. For Christian believers this land is the kingdom of God, the "commonwealth of heaven" of which the second reading speaks.

### Reading II: Philippians 3:17-4:1 (long form); 3:20-4:1 (short form)

Both the Second Reading and the Gospel speak of a "change." The second reading speaks of the change of our earthly existence in the final consummation; the gospel speaks of the change of Jesus as he prayed on the holy mountain.

The term "glorious body," like the term "spiritual body," which Paul uses in 1 Cor 15, reflects the apocalyptic hope. According to this hope, the life of the age to come will not be merely a prolongation of this present life but an entirely new, transformed mode of existence. It was into this mode of existence that Christ entered at his resurrection.

But his resurrection is not merely an incident in his own personal biography, as it were; he entered into that existence as the "first fruits" (1 Cor 15:20), that is, as the one who made it possible for believers also to enter into that new mode of existence after him.

That is the Christian hope.

## Gospel: Luke 9:28b-36

The use of the transfiguration story on the second Sunday of Lent in the revised Roman Lectionary follows the tradition of the *Missale Romanum*.

The Episcopal, Lutheran, and Methodist Lectionaries depart from the Roman Lectionary here and read the transfiguration story on the last Sunday after Epiphany. On that day it forms an admirable transition from the contemplation of the earthly ministry of Jesus as the manifestation of God in the Epiphany season to a contemplation of the passion as the ultimate epiphany.

In the Roman Lectionary the transfiguration story serves the theme: “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem.”

That Jesus and his disciples ascended a mountain for solitude after the abrupt conclusion of his Galilean ministry, and that Jesus communicated to his disciples his change of plan—which was to go up to Jerusalem and challenge the religious authorities in the nation’s capital—is historically plausible.

This original nucleus of historical fact was then rewritten by the post-Easter community in the light of its Easter faith. There is some indication in the Gospels of an awareness that the events of Jesus’ earthly life appeared in a different perspective after the first Easter (see John 2:22; 12:16). Thus, what happened on the mountain was rewritten with the use of Old Testament materials.

The change in the appearance of Jesus’ face is reminiscent of Moses on Mount Sinai (Exod 34:29). Moses and Elijah, both of whom figured in first-century Jewish apocalyptic as returning at the end, talk with Jesus about his “departure” (Greek: *exodos*), that is, his death and exaltation.

The disciples were ready enough to accept Jesus as one of the end-time figures, along with Moses and Elijah, but not yet as a unique figure of the end-time. So a voice from heaven proclaims the finality of Jesus: “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him” (note the allusion to Deut 18:15).

Then we are told that after this “Jesus was found alone.” The story as retold by the post-Easter Church is rich in symbolism, proclaiming that Jesus is the Son of God, his final emissary, and the second Moses, who accomplishes the new Exodus.

The addition of the words “at Jerusalem” in verse 31 looks like a redactional addition, for it is one of Luke’s major themes that the holy city is the focal point to which the ministry of Jesus moves. It is there that the saving event is accomplished, and it is from there that the proclamation of that saving event goes forth to the ends of the earth.

The point of all this is that the gospel proclaims, not a timeless myth (see 2 Pet 1:16, also about the transfiguration), but something that actually happened at a particular time and place in history.

Reginald H. Fuller