



**2nd SUNDAY OF LENT  
FEBRUARY 25, 2024**



**Mission Statement**

“Good Shepherd parish, under the guidance of the true Shepherd Jesus Christ, is a Catholic faith based community seeking to proclaim and live the gospel message. Recognizing our diversity, we strive to bring together a church family, welcoming all people as we grow together in faith, hope and love.”

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**SERVED BY**

Rev. Valentine Ugwuanya Pastor  
Ed Stolarz Director of Music Ministry  
Denise Perry Secretary

For more information on our parish please go to:  
Goodshepherdnj.com  
Or email us at  
gsirvington@comcast.net

**REFLECTION FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK ON SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT.**

As I was praying and reflecting in my own solitude, last week on Ash Wednesday, there came to my mind, a question, asking me if I have looked at the letters of my name and what it means. As I pondered, I noticed that in the middle of my name is Lent. When you remove 'Va and ine,' what is left is lent in the middle. So, I discovered which I haven't thought before in my entire life that my life is a life of sacrifice, self-denial, a life of trust and wait and sweetheart. Lent therefore, is a time for us to turn our hearts to God. It can be a time of prayer and personal sacrifice, practices that remind us of Jesus' time in the desert and, ultimately, his death on the cross. These practices also help us to discern the will of God, our Father at work in our lives.

In the Gospel of this Sunday, we see Jesus going to a solitude place up the mountain to pray. Mountains are places of encounter with God, they are also as such, often places of incomprehension. In the gospel of today, we find more confusion in the mountains. We were told that as Jesus went up to pray in solitude, as he transfigured, we learn that Jesus is following the will of the Father, and his divinity is revealed before the three disciples he took on a private retreat, in a way that does not clarify, but baffles and made the to be perplexed. This perplexity is compounded when our Lord tells these terrified disciples to keep silent about their mountain top experience until after his resurrection. We are children of God, and God is pleased whenever we follow God's will to the best of our ability. In the first reading from the Book of Genesis, we see this incomprehensibility and could imagine the anguish behind Abraham's answer to his son Isaac, on their way to the place of sacrifice without the sacrificial lamb for offering that was missing.

Like Abraham before these three disciples, they have only a glimpse of the divinity of Jesus and God's saving plan. They heightened the vision of their eyes to see the divinity of Jesus, so also, we have to heighten the vision of our faith in order to comprehend the divinity of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Jesus' disciples didn't fully grasp their mountain top experience or vision and they did not know how their faith would be tested or how important it was for Jesus was more than just a man. And they did not comprehend or understand what Jesus would die and rise again. But Jesus knew. We like the disciples, must trust God as Abraham did and wait for further understanding. And what do we learn when we trust and wait? The goal and purpose is to open our hearts and our horizon so that we can receive what is being offered and as God provided for Abraham the lamb for the sacrifice instead of his son Isaac so also God will provide for us. We have to trust in God's providence and obey his will. It is not easy to believe that it is in giving that we receive. Christianity is not easy religion. Like Abraham, Moses and Elijah, who felt terribly alone, often we can feel alone in being faithful to Christ today. The transfigured glory of our Lord Jesus strengthens us too, and reminds us that we are not alone, but in the company of heroes and the only thing we have to do is to trust and wait and listen to Jesus.

**Good Shepherd Parish Schedule for Mass & Worship (schedules are subject to change)**

Saturday (anticipated) 5:30pm  
Holy Day TBD.

Sundays —9:00am, 11:00am  
Reconciliation: Saturdays 4:45-5:15pm

National Holidays —9:00am  
Adoration Mo-Fri 7:30am-5:00pm

Mass Intentions For the week of February 24 – March 2, 2024

Saturday 5:30pm For the Repose of the Soul of Dominic Luca Casulli  
Feb 24

Sunday 9:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Rihanna Scott  
Feb 25 11:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Curtis Richards

Monday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Alfred Tatyrek  
Feb 26

Tuesday 7:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Mary Ann Pecorelli  
Feb 27

Wednesday 7:00am For God's Guidance and Protection on the Birthday of Mark Oliver Luna  
Feb 28

Thursday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Theresa Person  
Feb 29

Friday 7:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Maya Azzi  
Mar 01

Saturday 8:30am For the Repose of the Soul of Anna Hinton  
Mar 02 5:30pm For the repose of the Soul of Louis and Mildred Meola

*Kindly keep our parishioner's family, with health and other challenges, in your prayers*

Let us always remember in our prayers the sick members of our Parish

Denise Younker	Paul Kocum	Sandi Mosley	Debbie Watson	Rihanna Scott
Elizabeth Cassata	Pope Francis	Frank Rocchi	Camile Laidlaw	
Frederick Hamilton	Curtis Richards	Carlos Quinones	Venus Matthews	
Jean Michelin	Corizon Abuzied	Bob and Barbara Nezlick		

\* Please advise if any names should be added or delete from the list

Hospital Privacy | Please remember that current privacy laws regarding patients in hospitals do not allow hospitals/ pastoral care offices to contact parishes. If you or a loved one are in the hospital and want a priest to visit, please call the I office at (973)375-8568



**SAFE ENVIRONMENT CORNER**

**HOW TO REPORT ABUSE**

The Archdiocese of Newark takes very seriously any and all allegations of sexual misconduct by members of the clergy, Religious and lay staff of the Archdiocese. We encourage anyone with knowledge of an act of sexual misconduct to inform us so that we may take appropriate action to protect others and provide support to victims of sexual abuse. Call the Coordinator for the Office of Accompaniment in the Archdiocesan Department for the Protection of the faithful at

**201-407-3256**

Please contact Fr. Valentine or call the rectory if you are interested in Intentions, of a Sanctuary Lamp, Alter bread and wine or Alter Flowers



**Ministries:** If you're interested in ministries of service either as a Lector or Eucharistic Minister, please call the rectory at 975-375-8568 or fill out the Information below and place in the collection basket.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Lector \_\_\_\_\_ Eucharistic Minister \_\_\_\_\_



## **SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR B, FEBRUARY 25, 2024.**

### **THE MOUNTAIN TOP EXPERIENCE**

For centuries, people love to go and live or have mountain experience. The prophet Isaiah, said "On this mountain, the Lord of host will throw a banquet for all peoples..." (Isaiah 25: ) For some of us who have been to the Holy land, mount Tabor is a flat table shape mountain, it is about 1800 feet above sea level and it is the place that most ancient scholars agree is the site of the Transfiguration. The Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ, believed to have occurred on Mount Tabor, though Scripture does not identify precisely which mountain, was an event that left the apostles deeply moved for its clear revelation of the divinity of Christ as they were being prepared to face the scandal of their Lord being betrayed and undergoing his passion and death. The apostles clearly needed fortification to face the events soon to come. In the Synoptic Gospels the transfiguration follows Jesus questioning his disciples: "Who do you say that I am?" When he saw, they were starting to get it, he revealed a deeper understanding of himself. He was going to suffer and die and after three days rise from the dead.

So, the condition for following him was they must be willing to lose their lives for his sake and the sake of the Gospel. Then six days after this hard teaching, Jesus takes his trusted threesome, Peter, James and John, to Mount Tabor and was transfigured before them. Scripture tells us that while Jesus was praying in solitude on the mountain the appearance of his face changed and his clothing became dazzlingly white. Then there appeared Moses and Elijah conversing with the Lord. They all were arrayed in glory and the experience was something transcending time and space, yet real nonetheless, since all three apostles saw the same thing. Next a cloud overshadowed those present and a voice was heard from heaven saying, "This is my Son, my chosen One. Listen to him." Here Peter did not understand what the voice of God the Father said, he did not listen. The voice tells us that we have to listen to the voice of Jesus only and not other voices we are hearing today in our world today, but to listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd, who would lead us to the greener pasture where we will find refuge and get comfort. Having the Gospel of the Transfiguration so close to the beginning of Lent, points to the conclusion of the Lenten Journey — the celebration death and resurrection of Jesus. We do not have to pretend that Easter has not happened, but we are invited to grow in our faith understanding of this the most radical and fundamental of our Christian beliefs.

What is the significance of this event in the life of Christ and his apostles? There are various meanings, rich in their application. First and foremost is the glimpse and assurance the apostles are given that their Master is indeed more than a mere man, in fact he is the Son of God, and therefore the way, the truth and the life for them and all followers of Christ. Secondly, the Transfiguration carries with it the conviction that Christ will return in glory, just as he promised, with saving power for all who put their trust in him. Thirdly, the Transfiguration is an encouragement that even though the Lord would undergo rejection and death, that is not the end, but the way to resurrection and bestowal of eternal life on the world.

The appearance of Moses and Elijah at the Transfiguration, representing and summing up all of the law and the prophets of the old covenant, are reminders to followers of Christ that the Lord is the fulfillment of all that was taught and prophesied in the past.

In the voice that was heard on the mountaintop, there is a confirmation that Christ indeed came forth from the side of God and would pass through suffering and death, but ultimately rise and ascend to be seated once again and forever at the right hand of the Father.

"Master, how good it is for us to be here," was the exclamation of Saint Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration. By the way, at Ohum Benedictine monastery in Enugu State, Nigeria, when I was a seminarian at Bigard Memorial theological Seminary Enugu, some of us and other people on retreats, do go to the hill top to have encounter and experience with God. The sentiment we felt that time was "how good it is for us to be here," and this should be ours as well, with words such as these: How good you have called us into being, Lord, brought us to the Sacrament of Baptism and incorporation into your Mystical Body the Church, and sustained us to this present moment. How good if we have faith and a parish or monastic community to support us with a firm hope that we will all one day share in the bliss of eternal life in heaven in the company of those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith and with those who will come after us for this brief sojourn on earth.

Our history as humankind is the story of the search, in search and quest for meaning and happiness. It is also the story of trial and error, success and failure, sinfulness and repentance and ultimately, we receive forgiveness from God. It is probably the story of each of us individually as well. So often the search for happiness is sought where happiness cannot be found: in wealth and beauty, eternal youth, a giant bank account or a faster car or a bigger garage. In the end none of these in fact satisfy the human heart nor endure for long.

As the Scriptures said, it is only our faith, hope and love that lasts, but the greatest of these all is love. Our Lord came to teach us and show us that the path of true happiness is found in the way of dispossession, selfless-service, self-sacrifice, self-forgetfulness, compassion and to be generous to others. That was the way of Christ and the road on which he wishes to lead us too. Christianity is the way of the Cross, one emptying himself or herself and follow the foot steps of Jesus Christ in humility. Thus, transfiguration so close to the beginning of Lent, points to the conclusion of the Lenten Journey — the celebration death and resurrection of Jesus. We do not have to pretend that Easter has not happened, but we are invited to grow in our faith understanding of this the most radical and fundamental of our Christian beliefs.