



Second Sunday of Lent
† Sunday 12th March 2017

Cycle of Prayer: Candidates for the Sacraments & Wanderers and Penitents
Keynote: To live changed in faith

Book of Genesis 12: 1-4

'Leave your country,' the Lord God says *'leave your family and your father's house, for the land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation.'* We are reminded that in our own 'journey of faith' we have the personal example of Abram, sometimes referred to as 'our father in faith'. In this reading we hear the Lord God, calling Abram to travel with him, stepping out to follow the path of faith, with all its uncertainties; leaving the familiar in pursuit of God's calling. This is a real challenge to each of us. But like Abram, we can be assured of God's blessing, *'I will bless you and make your name famous.'*

Responsorial Psalm 32 [33] – A joyful song of thanksgiving

Second Letter of Paul to the Timothy 1: 8-10

The apostle Paul reminds his colleague Timothy of what it means to follow Christ. *'With me, bear the hardships for the sake of the Good News, relying on the power of God who has saved us and called us to be holy.'* Paul is deeply aware, that this God-given grace is not something that he deserved, *'it is not because of anything we ourselves have done,'* he reminds Timothy *'but for (God's) own purpose and by his own grace.'* So faith itself is a freely give invitation, a call from God, a free gift to which we may respond. The question for each of us is how to respond and what use are we to make of the gift we've been given?

Gospel according to Matthew 17: 1-9

'Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone. There in their presence he was transfigured; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light.' These 'three' disciples will figure large in the later account of the Lord's passion and resurrection. The 'high place' is the traditional place for God to reveal himself – as to Moses in the burning bush. Here on mount Tabor, Moses and the Prophet Elijah then put in an appearance, they are also famous 'seers' in the Old Testament, and here too they are witnesses. The three disciples are enlightened, they see Jesus illumined, for what he really is. Then *'suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow,'* the cloud that is a traditional symbol for the presence of God, and they hear the voice, *'this is my Son, the Beloved, he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.'* No wonder they were afraid and threw themselves upon the ground! But at that point Jesus touches them, *'Do not be afraid,'* he says *'stand up.'* Then they see only Jesus standing there with them. We too are invited to stand with dignity and in freedom in the presence of God, to listen to Christ. To stand with Christ is to be free – a slave no longer, we have no need to grovel on the floor at the foot of the master – free in faith we can stand with dignity to enjoy the honour of being children of God, and to come and stand with Jesus before the very throne of God. This destiny is what Peter, James and John witness this day when they saw Jesus for what and whom he is.

Note: Friday 17th March – In England and Wales – Feast of Saint Patrick, Bishop, Patron of Ireland