

Readings: *Genesis* 15: 5 – 12, 17, 18; *Psalms* 26 (27): 1, 8 – 10, 15, 16; *Philippians* 3: 17 – 4: 1;
Luke 9: 28 – 36.

Today the readings at mass are linked by the theme of God's revelation of an unbreakable relationship with his people.

In the reading from Genesis we hear the LORD speaking to Abraham who has obeyed the call to leave his homeland and travel to an unknown country. The LORD now re-affirms his promise to give Abraham descendants as many as the stars in the heavens and grant him a new homeland. Abraham *put his faith in the LORD, who counted this as making him justified* – that is, being in the right relationship with the LORD. But Abraham still wants a sign that he will inherit his new home. So, using a sacrificial covenant ceremony, the LORD ratifies the promise with a binding covenant. In his letter to the Philippians Saint Paul writes about the contrast between those who, like him, seek to follow the crucified Christ and those who *are behaving as the enemies of the cross of Christ*. These people that it is *earthly things* that are *important*.

But, Paul writes, we who follow the way of the crucified Christ are not concerned with earthly things. It is true that Abraham was promised and received a homeland on earth, but *our homeland is in heaven*, and to inherit it requires that we be changed by Christ, the man who comes from heaven: *he will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body*.

In the Gospel Reading we move from the outset of Christ's ministry, his testing in the wilderness, to its central point, his Transfiguration.

Having drawn from Peter the confession 'You are *the Christ of God*', Jesus takes the three closest of the Twelve to pray on a mountain. There his nature as the man from heaven is revealed by the appearance of *his glorious body*. But the subject of his conversation with Moses and Elijah is his *exodus* – the death which is to be the outcome of the journey to Jerusalem towards which he is about to set his face.

The Transfiguration is, like the mysterious sign given to Abraham, a pledge of what God is promising – though the Twelve do not understand. It is the promise that those who follow Christ to the end of his life on earth will be transfigured in their true homeland and will share his glory.