



There's a story of an 11-year-old girl named Marie who wrote weekly letters to her make-believe father. "Dear Daddy"— in her best handwriting, she would begin her letter. She addressed the envelope to herself, and, every week without fail, she would receive a letter from her "dad." For this shy youngster living in an orphanage, a postage stamp and a dream father were the only things that prevented her from succumbing to her heart-wrenching affliction. Each time she received her dad's letter her face would light up with joy so genuine and hopeful. The thought of a father writing to her and loving her, even made-up, was somehow able to transform her loneliness into bliss, her feelings of desolation into contentment.

It is not difficult to root for Marie. We somehow understand how miserable life can be if we do not have someone who truly loves us and cares for us. Life's struggles and troubles can only become bearable and meaningful if we deal with them, knowing that someone treasures us and has our back. To Marie, a make-believe father was helpful, but a real one could have made a world of difference.

Today is the second Sunday of Lent. All the three readings center on Jesus, the Son of God who was

Beloved Children



by Fr. Sisoy Cellan, SVD

transfigured on his way to suffering. Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son (First Reading), so God gave his Son for our sake (Second Reading). That same Son who had foretold his suffering was transfigured to offset the scandal of cross (Gospel).

It should be easy to understand why Jesus' appearance changed. "His clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could

bleach them," Mark the evangelist narrates. "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him" — the Father's thundering voice came echoing to disciples Peter, James, and John, who were with the Lord at that time. Such loving devotion of the Father to the Son, a protective and eternal love, an adoring affection made Jesus blush, shine with joy, buoyed his spirit up, and made him so happy that he became very radiant, beaming, and glowing. Of course, the term used in the Gospel for this is 'transfiguration.'

Love is transformative. It heals our wounds, changes our minds, and opens our hearts. It comforts and strengthens us as it also inspires us to do the same to others. We can go for days without food, but an empty heart bereft of love makes our suffering meaningless and our sacrifices pointless. In the words of St. John Paul II in *Redemptoris Hominis*, "Man cannot live without love."

We, therefore, need to listen to God's declaration of love for us. Marie did it with a make-believe father; Jesus experienced it with a real heavenly Father. As God's beloved children, our transfiguration occurs when we die to ourselves and become persons of faith, hope, and love for others.

PASTORAL CATECHESIS FOR THE YEAR OF MISSION *AD GENTES*

Continuing Recovery and Renewal

Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM

The 1945-1965 period in the life of the local Church in the Philippines is characterized by: quite rapid recovery from the ravages of war, greatly expanded school system at upper levels, involvement of Catholics (laity, sisters, clergy) in social action, and growing Filipinization of Church structures and administration.

The First Plenary Council of the Philippines (1953) focused on the "preservation, enrichment, and propagation of Catholic life" and offered Church resources "to renew the social order." The Church became involved in Catholic Action programs with farmers (FFF) and workers (FFW). From 1945-1965, the hierarchy issued 39 joint pastoral letters and statements on

a variety of subjects relevant to Church and civil society. The Philippine bishops sponsored a Marian Congress in Manila (1954) and inaugurated the Pontificio Collegio-Seminario Filipino in Rome (1961). The period saw a variety of renewal programs introduced, such as the Christian Family Movement and the *Cursillos de Cristianidad*.

In mid-year 1965, the nation observed a six-day renewal-celebration of the quadricentennial of the systematic evangelization of the Philippines (1565-1965). The bishops established the Mission Society of the Philippines, signifying Filipinos' commitment to spread the gift of faith they had received to other lands. Two other events would prove to shape significantly the experience and mission of our local Church: the election of Ferdinand Marcos, and the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council on December 8, 1965.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 27 [26]: 8–9)

(Recited when there is no opening song)

**Of you my heart has spoken:
Seek his face. It is your face,
O Lord, that I seek; hide not
your face from me.**

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here)

P — Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

All — **And with your spirit.**

Introduction

(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)

P — By his Transfiguration, Jesus shows us that the radiance of his glory comes from his acceptance of the sufferings and trials foretold by the Law and the Prophets. The cross brought Jesus to the glory of Easter which his Transfiguration foreshadows. May we see our trials and difficulties as opportunities for growing in faith and in hope.

Penitential Act

P — Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. *(Pause)*

P — Have mercy on us, O Lord.

All — **For we have sinned against you.**

P — Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

All — **And grant us your salvation.**

P — May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All — **Amen.**

P — Lord, have mercy.

All — **Lord, have mercy.**

P — Christ, have mercy.

All — **Christ, have mercy.**

P — Lord, have mercy.

All — **Lord, have mercy.**

(The Gloria is omitted.)

Collect

P — Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, who have commanded us to listen to your beloved Son, be pleased, we pray, to nourish us inwardly by your word, that, with spiritual sight made pure, we may rejoice to behold your glory.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

All — **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading

(Gn 22:1–2, 9a, 10–13, 15–18) *(Sit)*

Asked to offer his beloved son Isaac, Abraham obeys. God rewards him not only by sparing Isaac but also by abundantly blessing Abraham and his descendants.

A reading from the Book of Genesis

GOD put Abraham to the test. He called to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am!” he replied. Then God said: “Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him up as a holocaust on a height that I will point out to you.”

When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. Then he reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the Lord’s messenger called to him from heaven, “Abraham, Abraham!” “Here I am!” he answered. “Do not lay your hand on the boy,” said the messenger. “Do not do the least thing to him. I know now how devoted you are to God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son.” As Abraham looked about, he spied a ram caught by its horns in the thicket. So he went and took the ram and

offered it up as a holocaust in place of his son.

Again the Lord’s messenger called to Abraham from heaven and said: “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you acted as you did in not withholding from me your beloved son, I will bless you abundantly and make your descendants as countless as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants shall take possession of the gates of their enemies, and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing— all this because you obeyed my command.”

— The word of the Lord.

All — **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 116)

R — **I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.**

Sr. M. C. A. Parco, FSP

G

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1. I believed, even when I said, / “I am greatly afflicted.” / Precious in the eyes of the LORD / is the death of his faithful ones. **(R)**

2. O LORD, I am your servant; / I am your servant, the son of your handmaid; / you have loosed my bonds. / To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving, / and I will call upon the name of the LORD. **(R)**

3. My vows to the LORD I will pay / in the presence of all his people; / in the courts of the house of the LORD, / in your midst, O Jerusalem. **(R)**

Second Reading (Rom 8:31b–34)

God who spared Isaac does not spare his own Son Jesus, who gives his life to redeem us from our sins. Jesus' sacrifice is a sign of God's great love for us.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him?

Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us. Who will condemn? Christ Jesus it is who died—or, rather, was raised—who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

— The word of the Lord.

All — Thanks be to God.

Verse before the Gospel

(Cf. Mt 17:5) *(Stand)*

All — From the shining cloud the Father's voice is heard: This is my beloved Son, listen to him.

Gospel (Mk 9:2–10)

P — A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark
All — Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified. Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; from the cloud came

a voice, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them.

As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant.

— The Gospel of the Lord.

All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (*Sit*)

Profession of Faith (*Stand*)

All — I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day, he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P — In Jesus, the Father has shown us what life—with its sorrows and pains—means for us and for our salvation. In our weakness and inability to understand the meaning of suffering, we pray:

R — Lord of light, listen to our prayer.

C — In a world impatient with discomfort and imperfection, may the Church be a sign that all are pilgrims in this world that is in agony while waiting

for the full revelation of God.
We pray: **(R)**

C — Amid so much materialism and hedonism, may Pope Francis, our bishops, clergy, and consecrated men and women continue to witness to the Gospel values of poverty and sacrifice. We pray: **(R)**

C — May government officials listen to the voice of the poor and the weak instead of giving in to the demands of the rich and the powerful. We pray: **(R)**

C — May the transfigured Christ inspire us to rise from fear, anxiety, and despair and transform us into a people of courage, hope, and love. We pray: **(R)**

C — May we grow in the faith and trust that we are not lost in death but safe with the risen Lord in the hands of God. We pray: **(R)**

C — Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (*pause*). We pray: **(R)**

P — Lord, touch us with your grace. Celebrating your Son's Transfiguration, may we fill each moment of our lives with great faith and hope in you.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

THE LITURGY OF
THE EUCHARIST



Presentation of the Gifts (*Stand*)

P — Pray, brethren...

All — May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P — May this sacrifice, O Lord, we pray, cleanse us of our faults and sanctify your faithful in body and mind for the celebration of the paschal festivities.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

Preface

(The Transfiguration of the Lord)

P — The Lord be with you.

All — **And with your spirit.**

P — Lift up your hearts.

All — **We lift them up to the Lord.**

P — Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All — **It is right and just.**

P — It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For after he had told the disciples of his coming Death, on the holy mountain he manifested to them his glory, to show, even by the testimony of the law and the prophets, that the Passion leads to the glory of the Resurrection.

And so, with the Powers of heaven, we worship you constantly on earth, and before your majesty without end we acclaim:

All — **Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Kneel)**

Acclamation *(Stand)*

All — **When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.**

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All — **Our Father...**

P — Deliver us, Lord...

All — **For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.**

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion

(Kneel)

P — Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away



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the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All — **Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

Communion Antiphon *(Mt 17:5)*

This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.

Prayer after Communion *(Stand)*

P — Let us pray. *(Pause)*

As we receive these glorious mysteries, we make thanksgiving to you, O Lord, for allowing us while still on earth to be partakers even now of the things of heaven.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P — The Lord be with you.
All — **And with your spirit.**

Solemn Blessing

P — Bow down for the blessing.
(Pause)

Bless your faithful, we pray, O Lord, with a blessing that endures for ever, and keep

them faithful to the Gospel of your Only Begotten Son, so that they may always desire and at last attain that glory whose beauty he showed in his own Body, to the amazement of his Apostles.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

P — And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.
All — Amen.

Dismissal

P — Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

All — **Thanks be to God.**

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