

2nd Sunday of Lent March 1st 2026

Fr Justin Driscoll

6pm Ballarat East, 9.00am Gordon, 10.30am Ballan

“Consult not your fears, but your hopes and dreams.

Think not about your frustrations or your unfulfilled potential.

Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in,

but with what is still possible for you to do.” Pope John XXIII

It is still as relevant today as it was years ago when he called the 2nd Vatican Council and perhaps because of the prevalence of fear, it summons us to hope and dream. It was fear that overwhelmed Peter James and John on Mt Tabor, in the presence of the transfigured Jesus and Moses the prophet and Elijah.

In our present global moment it seems that we are often overshadowed, not by the glory of God, but by the dark and disfiguring clouds of natural disasters as in Japan with the earthquake and tsunami or Christchurch, New Zealand or closer to home in cyclone ravaged Queensland or flooded Victoria. So too our world is disfigured by dictators’ such as Gaddafi in Libya or Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak. Our world is disfigured by such political oppression, the corruption of greed, brutality and hatred. But much closer to home the small world of our own hearts can also be disfigured by inattention to Jesus and his teaching, by a hunger for power, status and materialism rather than for God.

The transfiguration of Jesus occurs on the mountain where Jesus leads Peter, James and John, six days after Matthew has Jesus state that his followers would have to take up their cross. The background of pending suffering provides the context for the transfiguration so too in our disfigured world, where suffering and injustice are so prevalent. Walter Brueggemann in his marvelous book, *The Prophetic Imagination*, says that the first task of the prophet is public lamentation. To lament is to declare, not by

denunciation or condemnation but by public weeping, that everything is not all right. The guardians of the status quo, those who own, operate, and profit from the going system, want the oppressed to believe that everything is basically as it should be, that the system is designed and guaranteed by God, and that eventually all the minor problems will be remedied. The prophet says that the system is not God's plan; that God is on the side of the oppressed, of those whom the system grinds up and presses down;

The second task of the prophet is to recall God's promises and so, by projecting a vision of an alternate future, to engender hope. Hopelessness is a surrender to inevitability and the unchangeableness of the present arrangement. With this new Word of promise the prophet can seed the imagination engender hope for a different world.

The third requirement for prophecy is the willingness to suffer, even to die, for the sake of the newness one is commissioned to announce. It is to be where the cry of the poor meets the ear of God.

Just as every First Sunday of Lent in every cycle of the liturgical year we go into the wilderness with Jesus, so every Second Sunday, for our encouragement, we remember his transformation, because that is the goal of our Lenten journey: Easter transformation through our conversion to "only Jesus".

In the first reading, Abram (later Abraham) is presented to us as such a person of great faith., at the word of God Abram left behind all the securities that defined a person in the ancient world: home, family and country - his past origins and his future inheritance - and set out for a place he had never seen, with his faith in God's word as his only global positioning system (GPS). Abraham is both courageous and vulnerable, but he trusts that God will bless him not just for himself, but so that he may become a blessing for others.

We are all on the journey of life, on two roads, where two lanes eventually merge into one. The first journey is our journey through our involvement in

the world around us and our search for our role - and usually multiple roles - in this world: as baptised disciples, as married, as parents, as single, as employees or employers, as religious women and men, ordained or lay ministers.

The other journey is the inward and longest journey: the search for oneself and the search for God which merge and end at our death, when who we have become, and if we have been a blessing for others, will be revealed before God in its truth.