First Reading  Gn 15:5-12, 17-18
A reading from the book of Genesis
God made a covenant with Abraham, his faithful servant.

Taking Abram outside the Lord said, ‘Look up to heaven and count the stars if you can. Such will be your descendants’ he told him. Abram put his faith in the Lord, who counted this as making him justified.

‘I am the Lord’ he said to him ‘who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldaeans to make you heir to this land.’ ‘My Lord, the Lord’ Abram replied, ‘how am I to know that I shall inherit it?’ He said to him, ‘Get me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtle dove and a young pigeon.’ He brought him all these, cut them in half and put half on one side and half facing it on the other; but the birds he did not cut in half. Birds of prey came down on the carcasses but Abram drove them off. Now as the sun was setting and darkness had fallen, there appeared a smoking furnace and a firebrand that went between the halves. That day the Lord made a Covenant with Abram in these terms:

‘To your descendants I give this land, from the wadi of Egypt to the Great River.’

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm
Ps 26:1. 7-9. 13-14. R. v.1
(R.) The Lord is my light and my salvation.
1. The Lord is my light and my help; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life before whom shall I shrink? (R.)
2. O Lord, hear my voice when I call; have mercy and answer. Of you my heart has spoken: ‘Seek his face.’ (R.)
3. It is your face, O Lord, that I seek, hide not your face. Dismiss not your servant in anger; you have been my help. (R.)
4. I am sure I shall see the Lord’s goodness in the land of the living. Hope in him, hold firm and take heart. Hope in the Lord! (R.)

Second Reading  Phil 3:17-4:1
A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians
Christ will transfigure these bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body.

My brothers, be united in following my rule of life. Take as your models everybody who is already doing this and study them as you used to study us. I have told you often, and I repeat it today with tears, there are many who are behaving as the enemies of the cross of Christ. They are destined to be lost. They make foods into their god and they are proudest of something they ought to think shameful; the things they think important are earthly things. For us, our homeland is in heaven, and from heaven comes the saviour we are waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body. He will do that by the same power with which he can subdue the whole universe.

So then, my brothers and dear friends, do not give way but remain faithful in the Lord. I miss you very much, dear friends; you are my joy and my crown.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation  Mt 17:5
Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ! From the shining cloud the Father’s voice is heard: this is my beloved Son, hear him. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel  Lk 9:28-36
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke
As Jesus prayed, the aspect of his face was changed, and his clothing became brilliant as lightning. Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up the mountain to pray. Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up the mountain to pray. As he prayed, the aspect of his face was changed, and his clothing became brilliant as lightning. Suddenly there were two men there talking to him; they were Moses and Elijah appearing in glory, and they were speaking of his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were heavy with sleep, but they kept awake and saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As these were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, ‘Master, it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.’ – He did not know what he was saying. As he spoke, a cloud came and covered them with shadow; and when they went into the cloud the disciples were afraid. And a voice came from the cloud saying, ‘This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him.’ And after the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. The disciples kept silence and, at that time, told no one what they had seen.

The Gospel of the Lord

Reflection
by Greg Sunter

In all three versions of this Transfiguration event that appear in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, the context in which the event occurs is identical. That’s a little unusual with these three gospel writers who like to put their own spin on events and often play with the chronology or settings of events. However, in this case, all three writers report the Transfiguration event as taking place immediately after a particular sequence of events. Jesus has asked the disciples who they think he is and Peter has made his confession of faith by declaring that Jesus is the Messiah. This declaration is followed by Jesus teaching about the demands of discipleship and then the account of the Transfiguration. Furthermore, all three versions are directly followed by an account of a man who brings his possessed son to Jesus for healing after the disciples have tried and failed to cast out the demon.

When all three of the synoptic gospels use the same story with little variation and all three retain the same context around the event then there are some pretty clear signals that this was a commonly accepted sequence of events and their sequence holds significance. The core message of this sequence of stories is about the faith of the disciples. Whilst Peter declares Jesus to be the Messiah, he and the others don’t really yet know what this means. In the Transfiguration, they are given the clearest possible indication of Jesus’ identity and yet they’re half asleep and we’re told Peter doesn’t know what he’s saying when he starts talking about building tents.

The following failure by the disciples to cast out a demon shows that they still haven’t understood fully who and what Jesus is. What a great reading for the season of Lent!
St. Polycarp was converted to Christianity by St. John the Apostle and became an important leader throughout western Asia Minor as the Bishop of Smyrna. Polycarp was eventually betrayed by a servant who had him arrested. He was urged to denounce his religion and to curse Christ, to which he replied, “I have served him for eighty six years and he has done me no wrong”. He was ordered to be burnt alive, and it is said that he offered a prayer of praise and glory to God and the flames did not harm him.

**CROSSWORD**

**Across**
1: to be selected
2: Jesus and the disciples heard God’s voice coming from this
5: bright with light
6: places that protect you from wind and rain
8: the high place where Jesus took his disciples to pray
10: afraid, scared
11: this man wanted to build three shelters

**Down**
1: things we wear
3: Mother is to daughter, as father is to ___ ___
4: he appeared with Elijah and spoke to Jesus
7: “They appeared in ___ ___ ___ ___ glory”
9: Peter wanted to build this many shelters