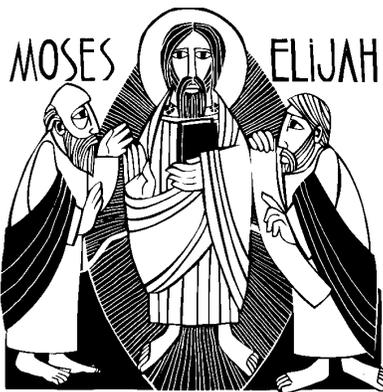


Church Begins at Home

February 11-17
Transfiguration Sunday/Ash Wednesday B

A Verse for the Week

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and
put a new and right spirit within me.
(Psalm 51:10)



Daily Readings

SUNDAY'S GOSPEL Mark 9:2-9 **Transfiguration Sunday**

Here is an event rich in symbolism. A cloud is a symbol for the presence of God, for even though one is aware of a cloud, it conceals more that it reveals. Moses and Elijah are two of the greatest figures of the Old Testament, representing the Law and the Prophets bearing witness to Jesus. We always read the story of Jesus' Transfiguration on the Last Sunday after Epiphany because when Jesus comes down off this mountain, he sets his face to go to Jerusalem and the cross.

MONDAY

Exodus 19:7-25

This story is from the very beginning of the Exodus, when Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt to the Promised Land. At this point they have crossed the Red Sea and made their way down to Mt. Sinai at the southern end of the Sinai Peninsula. Notice some similarities with yesterday's gospel: Moses goes up on a mountain and God speaks to him out of a cloud.

TUESDAY

2 Kings 2:1-12

Elijah was a prophet who performed many miracles in the northern Kingdom of Israel about 870 B.C. The story is sometimes called "the translation of Elijah", for the tradition is that Elijah did not die, but was taken directly to heaven. Elijah's "mantle" is a symbol of his power as a prophet. When Elisha, his successor, asks for a "double share" of Elijah's spirit, he is not asking for twice as much, but the portion due the first-born son, or two-thirds.

WEDNESDAY

ASH WEDNESDAY Psalm 51

(Turn the devotion sheet over to the Lent side today.)

Today begins the season of Lent. This psalm written by King David is typically used at the beginning of Ash Wednesday worship. King David wrote this prayer of confession after Nathan the prophet confronted him with his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah. You can read that story in 2 Samuel 11-12.

THURSDAY

Daniel 9:1-14

FRIDAY

Daniel 9:15-25a

The book of Daniel was written between 167-164 B.C., a time when Jerusalem was ruled by the Seleucid Syrian tyrant Antiochus IV Epiphanes (a successor to Alexander the Great). The writer speaks of current events by depicting them as prophecies made by a Jew named Daniel who lived in Babylon during the Exile under King Nebuchadnezzar. The first six chapters relate stories of David and his friends, giving instruction of how to live as Jews, faithful to the LORD God, in a foreign land. Chapters 7-12 are comprised of four visions which anticipate the downfall of Antiochus IV (which occurred in the Maccabean revolt in 164 B.C. – the event which Hanukkah celebrates). These readings from chapter 9 are fitting following Ash Wednesday for they are a communal confession. Daniel refers to Jeremiah's prophecy of a 70-year exile (Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10) as "70 weeks of years" or 490 years.

SATURDAY

Mark 1:9-15 (Tomorrow's Gospel)

The gospel reading for the First Sunday in Lent is always the account of Jesus experiencing a time of testing in the wilderness following his baptism.

Catechism Corner

(from Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*)

The Sixth Petition

Save us from the time of trial.

What is this?

It is true that God tempts no one, but we ask in this prayer that God would preserve and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins, and that, although we may be attacked by them, we may finally prevail and gain the victory.