Second Sunday of Lent
March 1, 2026

To see God face-to-face. That's the goal of each of us on our life's journey: To see God, in all his glory, face-to-face in heaven when the journey of our life is complete. Not even Moses or Elijah, who appear with the glorified, transfigured Jesus in today's gospel, saw God face-to-face during their time on this earth. But the Apostles—Peter, James and John—were gifted with a preview, a foreshadowing, of God's heavenly glory when they witnessed the Transfiguration.

So, how do we achieve our goal: That face-to-face meeting with God after our earthly life? Well, as 20th century radio commentator, Paul Harvey, would say: And now…the rest of the story.

I've been fortunate, as an adult Scout leader, to have twice taken part in 100-mile backpacking treks at the Philmont Scout Ranch in the Sangre de Christo mountains of northern New Mexico. During those treks, our group of 10 youth and two adults participated in various team-building exercises, among which was the "trust fall." In the trust fall, each member of the team, in turn, stands—with arms crossed—on a 6-foot high platform, while the other team members stand on the ground below in two lines of five facing each other with their arms extended. The team member on the platform then falls BACKWARD into the arms of the teammates, hopefully before hitting the ground. It's obvious why this exercise is called a "trust fall:" You need a lot of trust, a lot of faith, in your teammates!

Faith is the common thread through today's scripture passages, which are closely connected.

Through faith, Abram chose to act upon the word of the Lord to "go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you." Abram left everything familiar, everything he knew and loved, and followed God's will and direction into the wilderness, believing and acting upon God's promise. God led Abram to the land of Canaan, the promised land.

Faith isn't easy. It cannot be given to you by another human being or inherited, through your DNA, from your parents. It is a free personal choice. Abram could have said no, but he didn't. Faith is a response to God's revelation. It's your personal trust with your whole self. Through faith, you trust God, even when you don't see him nor feel his presence. **Faith is a belief in your mind, trust in your heart and obedience in your actions.**

Why then did Abram, and why would you, have faith in this unseen God? The psalmist in today's responsorial psalm, provides us with the answer: He assures us that we can have faith in, we can trust, a God who is **upright**, **trustworthy**, **just**, **righteous**, and **kind**; one who **knows us**, **delivers us**, **preserves us**, **helps us**, and **shields us**. Our God is a god in whom we can believe, in whom we can have hope and who we can love; faith, hope, and love. And that's not just "good news," that's GREAT news!

In the second reading to Timothy, St. Paul tells us that our life's goal is to become saints; to be holy like God. Being human, we cannot become holy by our own power. We're too weak; too human. That's why God, in his infinite mercy, sent to us "the Word made flesh," his Son, Jesus. Jesus means "savior" and he not only saves us from our sins, but he will also make us holy, if only we cooperate with his mercy and grace.

To increase our holiness, to become more in God's image, we need to shed our human failings. We need to **cast aside our selfishness, our distrust and our pride**. That's what Lent is all about: To focus, during these 40 days, on eliminating those ungodly traits that keep us from being holy. We need to give up:

- Selfishness in exchange for love,
- Fear in exchange for trust, and
- Pride in exchange for humility.

It's only the second week of Lent; it's not too late to continue on life's journey toward holiness and, at the end of that journey, to ultimately see God face-to-face.