

Second Sunday of Lent

Angie O’Gorman | Mar. 18, 2011

Matthew’s situation reminds me of the current argument between those who believe we must hold to the ‘original intent’ of the U.S. Constitution and those who argue all such documents are living texts, always to be adapted to present needs. For generations, while Jews and Jewish Christians shared worship and ritual in the synagogues, there was understandable tension between the old and the new. In the scribal tradition -- Matthew’s tradition -- new insights did not replace or negate the old; they expanded it. Matthew was trying to understand the meaning of Jesus against the backdrop of both men’s Jewish heritage and trying to adapt that heritage to new developments in salvation history. Matthew’s gospel is a Jewish rather than a Christian book.

So who appears with the Transfigured Jesus? Moses and Elijah, of course, for in Jewish thought, neither man had died natural deaths. Both were taken up bodily into God’s presence -- Elijah arriving in a fiery chariot. Jesus, Second Sunday of Lent, expanding the tradition -- having conquered death himself. And, of course, God’s translucent light shined on him, just as it had on so many of his ancestors leading the Hebrew people from their many forms of enslavement and into freedom.

Psalm 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22

Matthew 17:1-9

Matthew 17:1-9

[Le readings](#) [1]

[This reflection is from *Coming to Consciousness: Reflections for Lent 2011* by Angie O’Gorman

and is based on the lectionary readings for each day of Lent. *Coming to Consciousness* is a publication of Pax Christi USA and is reprinted here by permission of the author and Pax Christi USA.

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About the Author

Angie O’Gorman’s essays have been published in *America* magazine, *National Catholic Reporter*, and *Commonweal*. She has been involved in human rights work and nonviolent conflict resolution in the United States, Central America, and the West Bank. Her novel, [The Book of Sins](#) [3], was published last January.

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