Listen

In our heart of hearts

Who or what are we listening to?

I know we all hear the word of God

We all hear Sacred Scripture

But are we listening?

Because these are not the same thing

Adam and Eve heard God speaking with them

But they listened to Satan

Cain heard God speaking

But he listened to Satan

Except for Noah and his family

The people at the time of the flood refused to listen to God

When the people of Babble built their tower

They were listening to themselves

Not God

In our first reading today

The people of God are hearing

But not listening

So God has a special invitation for Abram

Abram was a very successful man

An elder among his people
Respected

Wealthy

Set in his life

In the midst of this setting

Abram not only hears the invitation

The voice of God

But he listens

*Leave the land of your ancestors*

*I will show you where you are to go*

And he is given a promise

*I will make of you great nation*

*I will bless you*

*I will make your name great*

*I will bless those that bless you*

*I will curse those that curse you*

These are the promises made

God desires a new start with his people

And in a response similar to Mary’s response to the angel

Abram leaves behind his plans

His place in the world

He listens and follows

For this he is our father in faith even today
No longer Abram and Sari

   But Abraham and Sarah

   Their descendants are Jesus’ ancestors

   And like Abram

   Jesus’ disciples have to learn how to listen

They know there is something special about this man they are with

   But they don’t know everything

   They have heard him speak

   But do they really listen?

So Jesus takes his 3 closest disciples with him

   Up a mountain by themselves

   Where Jesus reveals who he is

In his transfiguration they begin to learn how to listen

   But not all at once

   First, Jesus is transfigured

   His face shining like the sun

   His cloths white as light

   He is offering a glimpse of his glory

So when he suffers and dies

   They will know there is more

   When their human senses fail

   They will rely on their spiritual senses
So they will not only hear him speak
But begin to listen
Then, he is there with Moses and Elijah

The law and the prophet
Conversing with Jesus
They hear them speaking
But it goes no deeper
They think they are there only for themselves

*Lord, it is good we are here*
*We will build 3 tents*
What he is really saying is

*We will do this so we can stay here*
*We don’t need to go back to the others*
But while he is still speaking
A cloud covers them
And a voice

*This is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased*

*Listen to him*

Now they are beginning to learn to listen
They fall prostrate and are afraid
Then Jesus touches them
Rise up, and do not be afraid
He is back with them in his humanity
   But he knows that they are still learning to listen
So he tells them

   *Do not tell the vision to anyone*

   *Until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead*

   The resurrection is the event that will open their hearts as well as their ears
   Then they will have learned to listen
This is another reason for this time of Lent
   There is so much that demands our attention
   So many voices to hear
And many times we find ourselves listening to the wrong voice
   In our Office of Readings today
   We read from the Pastoral Constitution on the Church
This is a document from the Second Vatican Council
   It tells of many things in the world that can grab our attention
   How we can fail to listen to the voice of God
   And listen to our own inner voice
   We can find ourselves following our ego
   And not God’s Word
   There are tensions in the world that reflect the tensions in the human heart
We can achieve the best and the worst of humanity
    We can seek freedom or slavery
        We are limited
            But our aspirations are limitless
                Which voice do we listen to?
Do we seek a materialistic way of life?
    Do we seek the promises of a godless philosophy?
        Do we think we can be saved by human efforts alone?
Even in our faith life
    There are so many demands that the Church change
        Change the teaching on whatever is my personal favorite
            Change the liturgy
                Make it more relevant to me
Do we think the Church is here to serve me?
    Or am I here to serve God through serving His people?
Do we despair of any meaning in life?
    Here today; gone tomorrow
The great questions of human history are still there
    For each generation, each person to struggle with
        What is the meaning of pain and suffering?
            Why is there evil in the world?
                Why am I here?
Why is there anything at all, rather than nothing?

It is our belief that there is meaning

There is a purpose

And that meaning and purpose is not about following our own ego

It is not about following the voice of the world

It is wrapped up in our Gospel reading today

The transfiguration of Jesus Christ is our destiny

Christ; the same yesterday, today and forever

This is the certainty that is the foundation of our faith lives

Things may change

But Christ does not

The voice of the world is enticing

But it does not last

We can have a new beginning in Christ

No matter where we have been

What we may have done or not done

His invitation of divine blessing is for us

We are strengthened for our trials as we glimpse our future glory

In the transfiguration of our Christ

When we choose Christ

When we listen to the invitation before us

Our true destiny is set before us
So we have this special season of Lent

To quiet the voice of the world

To place aside the trappings of the world

To hear not only the spoken word

But listen to the word deep in our hearts

To walk with Christ in the wilderness

To leave the things of the world behind

And grasp firmly to the things of eternity