

## What a Blessing!

**T**oday's readings don't seem Lenten. They are uplifting, not penitential. God makes promises to Abram of extraordinary good fortune, political protection, and international status. The man must have been thrilled. Paul reminds Timothy that the life of holiness and blessing to which we have been called is a gift from God; always available to us, and not a reward for any good works we might have performed. And then we hear of Jesus' transfiguration in the sight of a few disciples. They were so overwhelmed by that spectacular experience they wanted to pitch tents so they wouldn't have to leave the place. How are such wondrous ideas penitential?

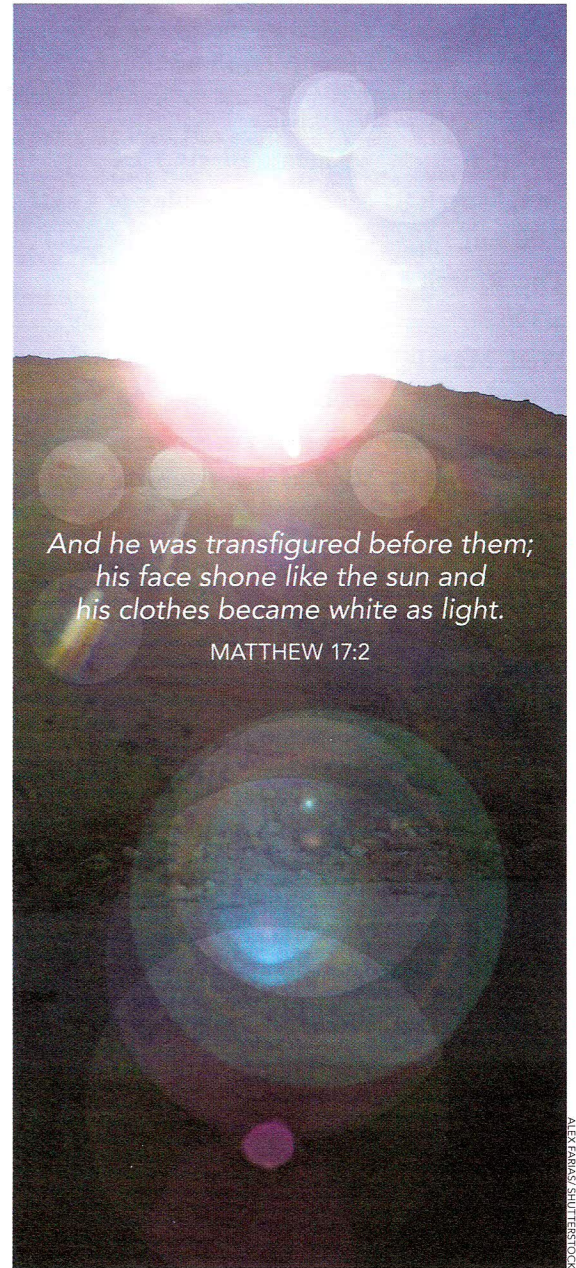
While God's marvelous blessings are free gifts, we are expected to respond to them appropriately, to accept them and use them for the common good. Abram's blessings were not simply for him and his family. "All the families of the earth will find blessing in you" (Genesis 12:3). His blessings would open a door to others—other nations, other ethnic groups, other religious communities. Abram was not simply chosen by God. He was chosen so that others might be blessed through him.

Timothy was instructed to "bear your share of hardship for the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:8). The blessing might be a gift, but it carried the responsibilities of discipleship. The voice from heaven told the disciples: "Listen to him" (Matthew 17:5). Being chosen by God or having seen the glory of Jesus calls for a change of mind and heart. This change isn't easy to accomplish. It is the reason for penance.

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

### FOR *Reflection*

- ★ *In what ways might you be a blessing for others?*
- ★ *Listen to Jesus. What is he saying to you?*



*And he was transfigured before them;  
his face shone like the sun and  
his clothes became white as light.*

MATTHEW 17:2

