

Homily of Second Week of Lent, Year B

Abraham's story is familiar to us. Abraham was called by God to leave his native land for the land God would show him. Abraham obeyed (Genesis 12:1). Today, as we have read in the first reading, God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his only son. He obeyed. He set out with his servants and Isaac. As they were on their way, Isaac asked Abraham a heart breaking question: "The fire and wood are here, where is the lamb for the sacrifice." Abraham answered with faith and confidence: "God himself will provide the lamb for the sacrifice" (Genesis 22:8). That was prophetic. Earlier in the same chapter 22, Abraham gave a prophesy when he said to his servants that accompanied him, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there to worship and then we will come back to you" (Genesis 22:8). All Abraham's prophecies were fulfilled; God provided a ram, not just a lamb which he sacrificed to God. Then, Abraham and Isaac went back to the servants and they returned home. James 2:23 says of Abraham, "The word of Scripture was thus fulfilled, Abraham believed in God so he was considered a righteous person and was called a friend of God."

In the second week of Lent, what can we learn from Abraham's relationship with God?

First, Abraham's faith in God, his confidence in God and his obedience to God are presented to us to encourage us on our journey of faith, and in our relationship with God. Lent is a season of repentance and grace. There may be issues affecting, negatively, our relationship with God. We are invited to sacrifice them. If we do this, our reward from God will be great. In the second reading, St. Paul says, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Whenever we put God first, he takes care of us.

Second, although Abraham was on his way to sacrifice his son, his prophetic words showed his faith, confidence and positive thinking. Abraham said: "God will provide the lamb." "We will come back to you." Abraham teaches us to remain positive and trust God even in worst times.

When Jesus transfigured, as we have read in today's Gospel, his clothes became dazzling white. This is an invitation to each one of us, in the second week of Lent, to transfigure in such a way that God's divine beauty in us will shine out. Every human being has God's divine beauty. Many times, this beauty is covered by dark clouds of sin and concerns of life. If rays of sun which is the brightest light God created can easily be covered by cloud, how much more then can sin and concerns of life easily cover and hide God's beauty in us.

During the transfiguration God speaks of Jesus, "This is my beloved son. Listen to him." Jesus himself says, "The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life" (John 6:64). Jesus also says about himself, "I am the light of the world" (John 9:5). The light of Jesus dispels every cloud of sin and concerns of life. If we listen to Jesus' words and remain in his light, we will experience our own transfiguration. Our divine beauty will shine forth again.

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