

Sunday February 28th, 2021

## **Second Sunday of Lent Parishioners Reflection**

*By: Gerald Mackrell*

In the Old Testament and even in the time of Jesus, animal sacrifice was common. Giving the best of what you possess was important when making an offering to God. God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And Abraham said, "Here I am." Then God said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac whom you love, and offer him as a burnt offering." Without hesitation Abraham set out to comply with the wishes of God.... Why? My reaction to the actions of Abraham at this request from God was, you must be kidding. I have two sons whom I love dearly and would never have submitted to such a request. Why was Abraham quick to respond to his son being the sacrificial lamb? Abraham was revered as a man of God, Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his forces when addressing Abraham said, "God is with you." Why then would God lay this burden on Abraham? There had to be some reason for such a request and why Abraham responded without any hesitation.

God tested Abraham, this is certainly true, but, what a lesson for the rest of us. For placing God first in his life, Abraham was rewarded with the promise of offspring as numerous as the stars in heaven. Something he had not thought possible.

To abandon one's self in faith to the voice of God as did Abraham, a relationship must first be established. Praying for, asking guidance or just knowing He is hearing is all very well, but we must take time to listen. Daily we are subjected to endless chatter that often leaves little or no time to listen to someone who can make a real positive impact in our lives. Developing a little mantra known only to you and the Lord will disrupt negative chatter and be an uplifting experience for you. As the relationship between you and God starts to grow, do not be surprised if He requests something from you that will take you out of your comfort zone. But never fear, it will always be for your benefit. Sacrifice is the giving of your best. The story of Abraham and Isaac is almost a precursor to the second reading where Paul talks of the crucified Christ saying, "He who did not withhold His own son, but gave Him up for all of us." God gave His best for our redemption.

Jesus takes Peter, James and John to a high mountain where He was transfigured before them. Only then did Elijah and Moses appear to them. After their conversation with Jesus, a cloud overshadowed them. A voice from the cloud said, "This is my son, the beloved: listen to Him!" On the way down the mountain, Jesus told them not to tell anyone of this until the Son of man had risen from the dead.

One thing intrigued me about the meeting between Elijah, Moses and Jesus was, what were they talking about? Jesus told

his disciples as they descended the mountain to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of man had risen from the dead. This remark puzzled the disciples, what is Jesus talking about?

St. Paul in the second reading provides a clue to this mystery when he wrote, it is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Sin, which is death, has been overcome. I believe Jesus was telling Elijah and Moses that their time of waiting is almost over, that His death and resurrection were immanent. The apostles were to learn in the very near future just what Jesus was talking about. They would be witness to His resurrection, they would now see Him in all His glory.

As Jesus returned to the Father, accompanying Him were Elijah, Moses and untold numbers of repentant sinners who had waited for this ultimate of sacrifices to be made. None could enter heaven until Jesus had overcome sin which is death. Therefore, Jesus dying on the cross could say to the repentant thief, "Today you will be with me in paradise."

The reason for living is the opportunity for repentance.