

Second Sunday of Lent: Gen 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18. Rom 8:31-34. Mk 9:2-10.

-

The Gospel on Sunday will be this:

Mk 9:2-10.

After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, 3 and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller

on earth could bleach them. 4 Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus. 5 Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 6 He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified. 7 Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; then from the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." 8 Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them. 9 As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. 10 So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant.

-

* The first reading will be this:

Gen 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18.

Some time after these events, God put Abraham to the test. He called to him, "Abraham!" "Ready!" he replied. 2 Then God said: "Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him up as a holocaust on a height that I will point out to you."... 9 When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. Next he tied up his son Isaac, and put him on top of the wood on the altar. 10 Then he reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son. 11 But the LORD'S messenger called to him from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. 12 "Do not lay your hand on the boy," said the messenger. "Do not do the least thing to him. I know now how devoted you are to God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son." 13 As Abraham looked about, he spied a ram caught by its horns in the thicket. So he went and took the ram and offered it up as a holocaust in place of his son... 15 Again the LORD'S messenger called to Abraham from heaven 16 and said: "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you acted as you did in not withholding from me your beloved son, 17 I will bless you abundantly and make your descendants as countless as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants shall take possession of the gates of their enemies, 18 and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing--all this because you obeyed my command."

-

The second reading will be this:

Rom 8:31-34.

What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him? 33 Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us. 34 Who will condemn? It is Christ (Jesus) who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

-

Meditation:

The readings this Sunday are about the sacrifice of a son running through the whole Bible.

The crucifixion of Jesus was prophesied by the way Abraham offered up Isaac (first reading). The marvell of our faith is that what seems a problem at first ends up as Good News. And our time of Lent will end up as Easter!

The Gospel of the 'Transfiguration' shows Elijah and Moses appearing along with Jesus to Peter, James and John. Old and New Testaments go hand in hand. Perhaps the fact that a cloud cast a shadow over them (Mk 9:7) is symbolising the fact that this linking of Old and New testaments is a complicated matter. It's not as simple as a straight-forward history book.

Lent is a time for reminding ourselves of our faults and saying sorry to God and for making an effort to 'convert', and that doesn't sound very attractive, but the readings this Sunday are reminding us of how merciful God is - willing to see his Son condemned to suffer 'hell' on a cross, in order to restore us, and that's Good News! The first reading tells of Abraham's willingness to give up his beloved son, Isaac, and there's a happy ending. It's there to help us to think of what the condemnation of Jesus meant for God - and still means! Our Father doesn't sit back watching. It affects Father and Son - and hopefully it affects us. The creator of heaven and earth is willing to go through the nails of a cross and also through paternal heartache, but why does God go through the upset? He goes through it for love of us! We're his children! It makes me think of the mother of a young drug addict who needed to make a very strong effort to kick the habit. The habit brought a lot of suffering. His mother didn't stand back and shout criticism and simply tell her son to make the effort. She herself joined a group of drug addicts so that she could help her son in kicking the habit. Of course, the way in which Christ identified with us 'addicts' was in a life far from superficial mundane pleasures, but I mention the mother of the addict just as an example as we think of how God is willing to go through a lot in order to rescue us from sin. And the end is victorious - as will be Easter. But will we allow Him to Resurrect in us?

In the first reading, Abraham 'obeys' a messenger from God, but God himself ends up obeying what Love calls for in the life of Jesus: Calvary. The creator of heaven and earth is willing to go through the nails of a cross and also through the heartache of a father giving up his son. And why does God do it? For us! That's the essence of what God is: God is Love!

Alcoholics talk about 'the demon drink', and we all have demonic temptations which try to get us 'hooked' and go against our faith, but 'If God is for us, who can be against?' (Rom 8:31). The atheistic world sees Christ as an unimportant nice-guy who didn't resurrect, but

that can be 'transfigured'! That makes me want to jump for joy. That's not easy at the moment in a wheelchair, but today is a day for at least starting by giving thanks (celebrating Eucharist). And hopefully we'll all end up rising along with Christ! Will we put ourselves in God's hands and die to selfishness, so that the Trinity can use our lives this Easter to continue their Good News of resurrection?

..... Dara.