February 28, 2021

2nd Sunday Lent, Year B

***Listening to Jesus***

Abraham lived about a thousand years before Jesus. At that time it was not uncommon for people to sacrifice their children, especially their firstborn sons, to various gods as a sign of total devotion. Abraham perceived that sacrificing Isaac was something also required of him; to demonstrate his commitment to God. But the God of Israel is not like the pagan gods and never demands such a sacrifice. The God of Israel wants life, not death.

Yet, the willingness of Abraham to ‘let go’ of what was most precious to him – the son of his old age – was an inspiration to the people of Israel. It’s faith in its extreme. Remember too, that Abraham had already shown a willingness to ‘let go’ of his family and his homeland to journey to an unknown land in response to God’s invitation.

The early church saw the relationship between Abraham and Isaac as pointing to the relationship between God the Father and Jesus. Like Abraham, God was prepared to ‘let go’ of what was most precious to him – his divine Son – out of love for humanity. God was willing to let his Son ‘become flesh’, with all that it meant: rejection and ultimately crucifixion.

St Paul is in awe at God’s generosity towards humanity. *“God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all.”* With such a total gift of love, we have nothing to fear from anything or anyone.

Peter, James and John are taken up a high mountain by Jesus. The experience is amazing. It’s an experience so precious that Peter *cannot* let it go. He wants to hold onto it forever. He says to Jesus, *“Rabbi … let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”* The disciples glimpse the dazzling and eternal beauty of Christ and they don’t want to let go. Yet, the disciples had to let go of this precious experience; it was only ever intended to be momentary. They will receive it again as a gift in the next life. For now, their task is to listen to Jesus, *“This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.”*

This is our task also. To live our lives listening to Jesus speak to us in the Good News and through the experiences of our daily lives. In listening, we’ll discover things which we are called to ‘let go’ – selfishness, unforgiveness, envy, hatred, gossip, prejudice, dishonesty; to ‘let go’ of people, places, security, health, life.

Like Abraham, may we have the faith and trust to ‘let go’ and to be open and ready to receive the precious gifts that God wants to give us; as we prepare for the day when we’ll meet God face to face in eternity and we can finally say, “*It is wonderful to be here.”*

David J Hore CSsR

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***We respond***

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn)

Remember your compassion, O Lord, and your merciful love, for they are from of old. Let not our enemies exult over us. Redeem us, O God of Israel, from all our distress.

**Or**

Of you my heart has spoken, Seek his face. It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; hide not your face from me.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 115)

Antiphon: I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

**RESPONSE: I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.**

LECTOR: I trusted, even when I said: “I am sorely afflicted.” O precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful. R.

LECTOR: Your servant, Lord, your servant am I; you have loosened my bonds. A thanksgiving sacrifice I make: I will call on the Lord’s name. R.

LECTOR: My vows to the Lord I will fulfil before all his people, in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem. R.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ! From the shining cloud, the Father’s voice is heard: this is my beloved Son, hear him. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.

TODAY’S READINGS Genesis 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18; Romans 8:31-34; Mark 9:2-10

NEXT WEEK (3rd Sunday of Lent, Year B) Exodus 20:1-17; Ps 18; 1 Corinthians 1:22-25; John 2:13-25