

HOMILY by Fr. Anthony Davis

“Rabbi, it is good that we are here...This is my beloved son, listen to him...”

February 28, 2021

2nd Sunday of Lent (Year B)

Gen 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13,15-18; Rm 8:31b.34; Mk 9:2-10

When hard things are being asked of us; when we must make hard decisions/choices, we can feel confused, anxious, and without solid foundation on which to stand. Indeed, we know that we are being asked to step out in faith yet have no idea how to respond.

Abraham, and his wife Sarai, had given up all hope on ever having their own children in their old age. But this “Promise keeping God”, who assured Abraham to make him the father of many nations, in His own time, caused his wife Sarai, to give birth to a son, Isaac. Yet this same loving God, was now asking Abraham to offer his only beloved son, Isaac, as a holocaust!

What kind of God is this, who gives a couple a child in their advanced years, and promises to make the husband “the Father of all nations”, only to ask him to sacrifice this very same son? But this isn’t Abraham’s response. He didn’t understand why such a request would be made, but he trusted the One who was making it and said: “Here I am.” Hence just as Abraham encountered the love and mercy of God on that mountain in the region of Moriah, so also, in today’s Gospel, Peter, James, and John would encounter the same love of God in the fullness of his humanity and divinity on a mountaintop.

The significance of this Mountaintop Experience: It is in this perhaps, depressed mood that today’s experience takes place. To give a boost to their morale, to help them see that the way of Jesus would lead to victory and triumph, Jesus takes Peter, James and John- the inner circle of the Twelve - to a high mountain. As the disciples watched, Jesus was suddenly transformed. “His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzlingly white. Then, suddenly, Moses and Elijah are seen talking with Jesus about all that he is doing, and of all that he will experience in the days to come. In short it was an awesome experience and on account of this, Peter, enthusiastically suggests building three tents for Jesus, Moses and Elijah so they could stay on the mountain forever. “It is good for us to be here....”

Then they came down from the mountain: Though being on the mountain was a wonderful experience, yet Jesus- (Emmanuel, God with us) -came down from the mountain to be with the people in their pains and sorrows, in their fears and anxieties, in their sicknesses and disabilities, and in their sinfulness. “I came that you may have life; and have it more abundantly” (Jn.10:10). Often, when things are good, we would like them to stay that way forever. Unfortunately, life is seldom like that. Hence, as it is true of Jesus, so it is true of his followers that we have to keep moving forward and come to terms with the happenings in our lives. “LIFE CAN’T BE ON CRUISE-CONTROL ALL THE TIME!!

Indeed, it is nice to spend quiet days at a lovely retreat house deep in the countryside. It is nice to have a good Mass with good homily, and lovely choir music. But most of the time our Christian life is to be spent sharing in the joys and sorrows of our brothers and sisters. I.e. We are to be the salt of the earth, the leaven in the dough, the candle on the lamp stand, helping people to know, understand and experience the love of their God for them. Remember the gateway to discipleship? -"If any desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt.16:24-26). And "As often as you do or do not do it to one of these the least of my brothers, you do or do not do it to me." (Mtt.25:40). Ultimately, like the disciples, though the road will be bumpy at times, if we stay with Jesus as true followers, his victory will be ours too, and we will have nothing to fear.