

2nd Sunday of Lent - A
Genesis 12:1-4a;
II Timothy 1:8b-10;
Matthew 17:1-9
Little Flower - 3/16/14

My Brothers and Sisters,

Most of us are familiar with the story of Abram or Abraham being asked to sacrifice his son Isaac. Also, we probably know that St. Paul referred to Abraham as our father in faith.

However, Abraham's journey of faith began with today's reading from Genesis: "*The LORD said to Abram: 'Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you.' ... Abram went as the Lord directed him.*" This story reveals the deepest meaning of faith. God asked Abraham to pack his belongings, gather his people, and leave his home and set out on a journey for an unknown land and an unknown future based only on God's word of promise.

Most of us feel most secure in our homes. For teenagers and middle school students, their bedroom is their castle. Going out from our homes, we all have different comfort zones. However, when we are outside our comfort zones, we feel very insecure. God asked Abraham to give up the search for security and to entrust his life and his future to God and God's word of promise.

Likewise, God asks us to entrust our lives and our futures to Him and to his Word of promise, Jesus Christ. If we did, our relationship with God and the demands of that relationship would become our first priority. Paradoxically, if we make our relationship with God our first priority, all our other priorities will fall into place. If we did, we would be willing to live Gospel values whatever the cost. As Paul counseled Timothy, "*Bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God.*" If we did, we would give up our search for security in money and possessions, power or prestige, or pleasure. Finally, if we did, holiness life would be our goal. As Paul wrote to Timothy, "*He saved us and called us to a holy life.*" Holiness is living in a right relationship with God, right relationships with others, a right relationship with ourselves, and a right relationship with our world.

What faith does not mean is that we abdicate responsibility for our lives and our choices. As Maurice Blondel wrote, "After having done everything as if nothing were expected from God, we await everything from God as if we had done nothing."

Every year on the Second Sunday of Lent, the Gospel tells the story of the transfiguration of Jesus. At the transfiguration, God the Father proclaims Jesus his beloved Son. The appearance of Moses and Elijah with Jesus proclaims that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Law and Prophets. Finally, at the end of the story, Jesus indirectly prophesies his resurrection. Therefore, we can say that Jesus' transfiguration prepared and strengthened his disciples for his impending suffering and death that would lead to his resurrection.

My brothers and sisters, Jesus' transfiguration also reminds us that if we have faith and live our faith in right relationships, we will be transformed, transfigured, into the best version of ourselves. We will grow into the likeness of the risen Christ. To the extent that we grow into the likeness of the risen Christ, to that extent Christ will shine through us, and we will witness to others the power of Jesus' resurrection.