

Second Sunday in Lent – Year B

First Reading – Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18

Genesis - Historical Considerations

- Traditionally attributed in Christian and Jewish tradition to Moses along with the other four books of the Pentateuch
- Most modern scholars see it as the compilation of a number of different sources that were edited and compiled between the 10th and 6th century B.C.

Spiritual

Does this passage disturb you? Does we a have a cruel God who even demands us to sacrifice our own children?

A couple insights into the story:

- 1) Abraham has not followed through on faith up to this point – he contrives to keep Lot in the Promised Land so that his descendants can continue if God does not keep His promise. Further, and even more striking, he has sexual intercourse with Hagar so that he and Sarah could have a child because he does not trust God’s promise. In two instances (with the Egyptians and Abimelech), Abraham betrays his wife Sarah by referring to her as his sister in order to preserve his own well-being.
- 2) Abraham is confident that the Lord will not truly demand his son’s life - He tells the servants that “We will...come back to you,” and tells Isaac that “God himself will provide the sheep for the holocaust” (22:5).
- 3) God is testing whether Abraham trusts the Lord’s promise which is totally dependent upon Isaac. God has promised Abraham that he will have “descendants as numerous as the stars” through Isaac, and how can this be if his life is taken?
- 4) This is part of an overall Genesis theme: the patriarchs must be able to give up their favorite son for God to bless their future. Abraham >>>> first Ishmael, then Isaac, Isaac>>>>>Jacob, Jacob>>>>>first Joseph, then Benjamin
- 5) The trauma of Isaac’s experience with his dad that day has an impact in his own life – he marries Rebekah at 40 and only has Jacob and Esau at 60. He waits around 50 years for children presumably because he does not want to have to do what his father did. This shows the generational devastation of sin and a lack of faith.
- 6) This key becomes an interpretive key for understanding God the Father’s offering of His Son Jesus

What is important in our life that the Lord might be asking us to give up so that he can multiply our blessings?

Second Reading – Romans 8:31b-34

History

- Paul likely writes this from Corinth to the church in Rome between 56 and 58 A.D.

Spirituality

If God has already given us everything in Jesus, how could he withhold anything else?
Do we truly believe that anything we need for our salvation is available to us?

- God as a judge who acquits - declared innocent
- Jesus as seated at the right hand of the Father

Gospel – Mark 9:2-10

History

- Author of the book traditionally thought to be John Mark mentioned in a number of NT passages and associated with St. Peter
- Traditionally thought to be written around 70 A.D. to a primarily Gentile audience

Spiritual

How do we ascend the mountain to God? - Purgative, illuminative, unitive
From another standpoint, why is it important to come down the mountain?

Mary Healy, “The Gospel of Mark”, *Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture* – “Understandably, Peter desires to prolong this mountaintop experience, so he enthusiastically proposes to make three tents. Peter may have in mind here the autumn Feast of Tabernacles, when the Jews camped out in small shelters made of interwoven branches to celebrate the harvest and commemorate the forty years in the desert (Leviticus 23:39-43). But his enthusiasm is misplaced; he wishes to capture this moment of theophany, and yet has not grasped what Jesus has told them: his glory will only come by way of the cross.”

Do we ever try to trap God in retreat/mountaintop experiences?