

2ND SUNDAY OF LENT CYCLE A MARCH 12, 2017

Last week, the First Sunday of Lent, you will recall that Jesus was in the desert – praying, fasting, alone, tempted by the devil.

This week Jesus climbs to the top of a high mountain. His three special apostles are with him. They are joined by Moses and Elijah and then surrounded by the Glory of God.

This journey of Our Lord from desert, to mountain top, and back down again, gives some context to our own Lenten journey for it somewhat mirrors our experience in life.

Sometimes we are challenged by what life throws our way: illness, sadness, worry, temptation; perhaps we are lonely and afraid facing the cold background of the desert.

At other times things are going well; we are surrounded by the friendly warm experience of being on top of the mountain. Like Peter, James and John we have moments of exceptional clarity about our faith: first Communion, Confirmation, Marriage, the Baptism of a child, and others. Then we come back down the mountain and ordinary life with its endless, mundane details resumes.

Lent is a good time to recognize our ups and downs, our successes and our failures, our faithfulness and our unfaithfulness.

To be sure no matter where we are – in the desert, on the mountain, or somewhere in between – God is seeking to transform us this Lent.

If you remember our First Reading last week from the Book of Genesis, it was all about Adam and Eve and the fall, our turning away from God.

This week our First Reading again from Genesis presents the call of Abraham.

God chose this one individual through whom he would bring salvation to all of humanity. God says to Abram - “go forth from the land of your kinfolk and from your father’s house to a land I will show you.” “I will make of you a great nation”. “All the communities of the earth shall find a blessing in you.”

We are one of those communities! Abram – who God will re-name - Abraham is the father of the Jewish people and our father in faith as well.

Keep in mind Abram was seventy-five years old when he was called to leave his land, his people, his culture, his social and his ethnic bonds. But God said go!

Abram and his barren wife Sarah respond to this call with faith and trust in God.

When you think about it every call from God requires us to move! You better have your bags packed for God wants us to leave where we are – if not physically, then mentally or spiritually. No one in the Bible is ever commanded to “stay right where you are! Don’t move a muscle!” “Just keep doing what you’re doing”

Now for most of us, God is not asking us to call a real estate agent, but God does want us this Lent to move closer to him. Or maybe another way to say that is – to allow God to move closer to you.

Now this “relocation” may involve insecurity and yes even hardship.

We are expected to abandon some things that provide us comfort and stability and pleasure; and to embrace some practices or actions that may be unfamiliar and difficult.

Also when God calls people in the Bible or when he calls you and me – we are never told all the details or all that might be involved. We start down a road, but we do not know where it will lead.

Until the day he died, Abraham would have to continue to have faith for he would only see the smallest part of God’s promise fulfilled.

And there's more – for when God calls us he is not asking us to embrace an idea or a philosophy; we are being asked to follow a person –

If you have ever surrendered yourself to a person – for example your husband or wife - you know that the discovery of where you are going is also a discovery of the person who is traveling with you.

God's unmistakable call to each one of us is to encounter and to embrace and to journey with the person of Jesus Christ.

It is on that mountain top that the disciples and we discover a lot about that person we are traveling with.

Peter, James, and John were given a preview of the glory of the risen Christ. That he was the fulfillment of the law and the prophets, and of the promise made to Abraham. “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well please; listen to him.”

In our Second Reading, St Paul reminds his young protégé Timothy that living out the Gospel entails hardship.

There is no way to be a follower of Christ Jesus without sharing in both his life and his death, in his crucifixion and his resurrection, in his suffering and his glory.

So let's try and keep our eyes open this Lent. Look for opportunities to renew and strengthen your faith and your commitment to this faith community.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote in her poem, *Aurora Leigh*,

Earth is crammed with heaven,
And every bush is aflame with God,
But only those who see take off their shoes,
The rest sit around and pluck blackberries.

We can only see what we are open to seeing. There's more of God around us than we can take in, but we can also miss it all.

We are invited this Second Week of Lent to behold the Christ of our tradition, to remember our peak moments of faith, and most of all to listen to him.

Don't stand on the sidelines. Respond to God's call. Move away from some of your routine, from the comfortable:

--pray more

--come to the Stations of the Cross.

--Pop into one of our Alpha sessions, even if you didn't sign up.

--Go to Confession. There are regional penance services this Lent in our area – including one right here at HFCC on March 28th.

--reach out to someone who is struggling.

--fill up that cauldron in the narthex so we can keep feeding those kids at St Martha.

As Abram was transformed by his journey to the Promised Land, and as Jesus was transformed by his journey to the father, the journey of Lent can transform us.....if we let it.