

Fr. Jeff's Weekly Homily

**2nd Sunday of Lent
February 17, 2008**

READING 1: Genesis 12:1-4

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.

Psalm 33

May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us who have put our hope in you.

READING 2: 2 Timothy 1:8b-10

Beloved: Bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God.

GOSPEL: Matthew 17:1-9

But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid."

Six year old Angie and her four year old brother, Joel, were sitting together in church. Joel was having a good ole time playing with his Bud the cowboy toy and giggling and talking out loud. Finally his big sister had enough: "You are not supposed to talk out loud in church." Joel looked at his sister and thought and then said, "Why? Who is going to stop me?" Angie pointed to the back of the church and said, "You see those two men standing by the door? They are 'hushers'."

Think about Abraham for just a moment. Now, simply because God promised them a better life, they were letting go of their former lives, their families, cutting their ties and loyalties and setting out for a new world. But they did take one important thing with them.

Stories about adventurers and pilgrims seeking a better life are the foundation of our American history. Even our "Native Americans," were likely from Asia. Many of our ancestors came for the sake of religious freedom. Some came to escape starvation and dead end poverty. Some came to escape oppressive governments. Waves of immigrants made the treacherous journey across the oceans to the New World and many arrived at Ellis Island. People crossing our southern border add to the rich tapestry that is created in our vibrant and vital culture. If there is anything clear from our history, it is that people can and will renounce security and familiarity for the sake of a better life. But if their lives are to be better; they bring that same one thing

Abraham and Sarah took wherever they went.

Lent calls us to consider some movement in our own lives. We are being pulled in many directions. Some of us compartmentalize our private life, our careers, our volunteer work, our intellectual interests and entertainment. Someone told me: "I have several loves." But there is only one love that leads to a better life. All the others take meaning from that love. If we put God first, all our other loves will fall into place. People may leave their homeland but by staying with God they don't leave their integrity behind. At stake in how we negotiate our many loyalties, our many commitments in life is our integrity. Integrity does not simply mean being honest. Integrity is about wholeness. To have integrity means that we can't draw lines cleanly dividing our loyalties because all of our attachments come together in God alone.

It might seem that the Transfiguration was a totally unique experience. I mean four guys climbing a mountain for some fun when all of a sudden Jesus just starts...well, blazing away. All the God-ness in him starts burning through the human-ness in him. How spectacular! But, I'd suggest, we know something about that. We see the spectacular luminescence of a bride and groom meeting at the altar; the newly ordained priest rising from the floor of the Cathedral sanctuary after the litany of saints has been sung. The faces of parents seeing their child for the first time are certainly glowing as God's co-creators in this new life. The faces of the parents when the last child leaves the home are radiant as they smile at their pride and joy. The Transfiguration reminds us that the commitments and loyalties of our lives will lead us through sacrifices we can't imagine to greater joy and glory than we can imagine if we are integrated in God.

When we think about it; isn't life a spectacular adventure!

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