



Second
Sunday
of Lent

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OUR LADY OF PEACE CHURCH
February 28, 2021

FROM THE DESK OF FATHER STAN



My dear friends,

If God is for us, who can be against us?

The first reading for this Second Sunday of Lent, Genesis 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18, is part of the story of the ancient Patriarchs, the forerunners of all the generations of people we read about throughout the Bible. The first to be chosen is Abraham, from whom will descend the three major monotheistic religions (belief in one God)—Judaism, Christianity and Islam. When called by God, Abraham is exceedingly old, aged about one hundred, as is his wife Sarah. They are childless, which was a painful reality in that children were considered a blessing. Nonetheless, God engineers a miracle in the life of the barren couple, and they have a son, named Isaac.

Our passage deals with God's great testing of Abraham. God had already promised that Abraham's descendants would one day be as numerous as the stars of the sky or the sands of the seashore. But now, God requests an act that would, in effect, destroy the promise: God said, "Take you son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him up as a holocaust on a height that I will point out to you." Once Abraham arrives at the site, he builds an altar, gathers wood and places it on the altar, preparing for the sacrifice. As he takes out his knife to kill his son, God calls out to him from heaven: "Do not lay your hand on the boy. Do not do the least thing to him. I know now how devoted you are to God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son." God then reaffirms the covenant agreement he has entered with Abraham. "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you acted as you did in not withholding from me your beloved son, I will bless you abundantly and make your descendants as countless as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants shall take possession of the gates of their enemies, and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing—all this because you obeyed my command."

I am sure that many readers find this passage difficult in that it appears to portray God in a brutal and heartless manner. The fact is that there were many religions at the time of Abraham in which the sacrificial offering of children was practiced as a way of winning favor with God. Many scholars argue that this passage demonstrates that the God presented in the Bible rejects the practice. It is Abraham's trust and obedience that are the point. Abraham trusted in God, even when he could not have understood how the story would ultimately end.

Our gospel reading, Mark 9:2-10, presents the Transfiguration account. Jesus takes the inner circle of disciples, Peter, James and John, and leads them up a high mountain. Suddenly, a miraculous occurrence takes place. Jesus becomes transfigured "and his clothes became dazzlingly white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them." Then, two ancient figures, long dead, appear: Moses and Elijah, representing the Law and the prophets, the entire history of the chosen people. Finally, a cloud overshadows the place, and from the cloud a voice is heard: "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." At that point, "they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them." Jesus then points to the future meaning of the vision, which will one day be more fully understood. "As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant."

Genesis and Mark are presented together because of their similarity. Abraham is asked to sacrifice his son, but then is spared from doing so. In the case of Jesus, however, God's own beloved Son will die on the cross. In the writings of St. Paul we find that the early Church understood the crucifixion, Jesus' choice to lay down his life for his friends, and God's allowing it to happen, as a demonstration of the total love God has for us. Paul asks, "If God is for us, who can be against us? Is it possible that he who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for the sake of us all will not grant all things besides?" It is this total love, revealed in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that we are preparing to celebrate at Easter. Like Abraham, we who stand at the foot of the cross and outside the empty tomb, are asked to trust in our God who loves us totally.



STATIONS OF THE CROSS with Deacon Joe will be offered on the Saturdays of Lent at 3:00P. All are invited to spend this time of prayerful reflection to deepen their relationship with God and to experience the spirit of the season.



Saturday, February 27

4:00P *Michael & Helen Milewski*
by Cindy

Sunday, February 28

8:00A *Edward & Mary Coogan*
by Sharon

10:00A *Genevieve Grader*
by Dennis & Cyndee

Saturday, March 6

Stations of the Cross 3:00P

4:00P *Steven Saharceski*
by the Eichorn family

Sunday, March 7

8:00A *Deceased members of the Richotte family*
by their family

10:00A *Alex & Pauline Litkowski*
by Dennis & Cyndee

DAILY MASS

Monday, March 1

8:00A *Marleen Barrett*
by her family

Tuesday, March 2

8:00A *James Kiley family*

Wednesday, March 3

8:00A *Ted Croteau*
by his wife & children

Thursday, March 4

8:00A *Jimmy Brodie*
by Sandra Rose

Friday, March 5

8:00A *Holy Communion Service*

Our Lady's Window

March 2 *Mitchel Mroz, Sr.* by Betty & Mitch Jr.



Please remember in your prayers all those who recently died: *Robert Girard, Agnes Lenois, Catherine Berry, Theresa Greene, Paul Ozdarski, and Helen Sokolosky*

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

In memory of *Terrie Greene* by Michele Hazlett and Helen Woznakewicz; and in memory of *Maurice Fugere* by the Turners Falls Athletic Club.

IDEAS TO LIVE LENT 2021

and foods to donate to the *Community Meals Project*

- March 3 Pay for the car behind you in the drive-thru
- March 4 Donate to a local food pantry
- March 5 Send a note of encouragement
- March 6 Surprise someone with a gift of chocolate
- March 7 Be kind to yourself
- March 8 Fast from constant activity and noise
- March 9 Avoid negative thoughts and words

Add to this week's shopping list: Knorr brand pasta sides, Rice-a-roni & varieties of canned soup



An Ash Wednesday to remember—receiving ashes in the parish parking lot during the COVID 19 pandemic.

CONGRATULATIONS to the January 2021 winners of the **Lucky Number Club**: Carol Holubecki (1st); Steve and Marcia Caloon (2nd); and Sam Bobala (3rd). The special prizes for the start of the Club's new year, gift cards to Terrazza's at the Country Club of Greenfield, were won by Jane & Stephan Smith and Louis Socquet. For more information on how the Lucky Number Club supports the efforts of the parish Justice and Peace Commission, call the rectory 413.863.2585.

WEEKLY COLLECTION

February 21, 2021

Regular collection/mail	\$2,207.00
On-line	\$899.00

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