

2nd Sunday Lent A (Matt 17:1-9)

There's a cartoon that sticks in my memory. It shows a rather dejected, unsuccessful, middle-aged husband, forlornly looking down at his shoes, while his plump and frumpy wife was critically saying to him: "When I first met you, I thought you were really going to **be somebody**. Instead, **you're just you**." I wonder how many of us can identify with that dejected husband who didn't live up to the expectations of his critical wife, nor probably the expectations of himself.

How different was Abraham in later life, who earlier in his long life was probably much like our cartoon character, not going anywhere in life, probably unsuccessful, just an ordinary wandering sheep herder living from day to day scratching out an existence, not even being able to father a child by his wife, Sarah, until later in life. What a disappointment and a shame in that culture which valued fertility and children so highly. As commonplace and ordinary as Abraham was, he did possess the beginnings of a faith and trust in God that allowed him to hear and respond to God's loving invitation to go beyond himself, to realize the destiny God was calling him to as the father of multitudes, the one whom Moslems, Jews and Christians honor to this day as our Father Abraham.

Perhaps most of us can relate to Abraham in some way. He was a man whose faith in God was weak, yet he gradually opened himself up with the help of God's grace to transcend himself, to go on a journey from his hometown, possibly Ur of the Chaldees, across a barren desert, to a destination he knew nothing about, but to which God was leading him after establishing a covenant relationship with him. We too are people with whom God has made a covenant. We also are called to respond in faith to our unknown destiny as we journey through life supported at every step by the sustaining grace of God. All God asks of us is openness, generosity, and trust. It sounds so easy, but it is often a fearful enterprise.

Sometimes God calls us out of our Ur of the Chaldees as he called Abraham. Sometimes God calls us to a new life of personal conversion to a new life of interior transformation. Sometimes, this call can be to married couples in which God asks them to take a long hard look at their relationship after years of dissatisfaction, or a knowing feeling that that somehow their marriage covenant could be better. They may be asked to take a look at how they communicate with each other; how they express their love and caring; how sensitive they are to each other's needs. Sometimes they will respond by making a Marriage Encounter, or seek counseling to help them in their marriage covenant.

Occasionally it may happen that people have experienced the painful and fearful separation of divorce or widowhood, and must make the journey alone, sustained by God's loving grace on that growth-filled journey to a new and abundant life.

With Peter, James and John, let us go to the mountain to pray with Jesus as he is transfigured by his loving Father. Let us hear the Father's words, "This is my Son, my Chosen One. Listen to him." Let us indeed listen to him however he may speak to us. In faith, we too will be transformed if we leave ourselves open to the loving Father of Jesus. Jesus' promise to us is that he will be faithful and that we can trust him implicitly, for we are his people and he loves us beyond measure.

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