

One of the questions that is becoming more a matter of concern all the time, particularly in this time of the pandemic, is this one: “Who can we trust?”

We live in a fragile world, the world inflicted by mistrust and divided by race and social status. However, it makes all the difference when there is trust between people. If people can trust each other, our world can never be the same.

Trust is essential to everything we do in life. We trust the other drivers on the road to stop when the light turns red. We trust the builders of bridges to get it right when they build a long span across a wide waterway.

We trust the doctor to be accurate in her diagnosis and the hospital to provide the equipment and the sterile environment needed to survive a disease. We have to trust the banks, the government, yes, even Wall Street to guard our funds for our declining years. We trust that when we stand at an altar the person we are pledging ourselves to will fulfill their vows.

We also trust in God, and more so when life itself threatens to overwhelm us. We trust in the God who knows us down to the last hair on our head, and who wants nothing, absolutely nothing, but the best for us. When everything around us seems to be falling apart, the challenge that faith puts before us is to trust that God will be there for us and with us.

In today's psalm we hear:

"I kept my faith, even when I said: I am greatly afflicted."

The Psalmist says that he is greatly afflicted, and yet in the same sentence, he tells us that he kept his faith.

Isn't this what Abraham also went through?

He is given the mysterious command to sacrifice his only son Isaac. Please remember that this is his only son. To prove his faith in God, Abraham obediently does as God asked. He proceeds to sacrifice his son, trusting that God had his best interests at heart and would make it all work out for the best. What a great act of faith!

Our first reading today tells us. An angel of the Lord stopped Abraham in the midst of his sacrificing his son and a lamb was provided in his place. God praised Abraham's faith and again promised a multitude of descendants through whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

LENT II – Year B

Genesis 22: 1-2, 9-18; Romans 8: 31-34; Mark 9: 2-10

The blessing has come down to us. It has come in the personage of Jesus Christ who is a descendant of Abraham. Abraham is the Father of Faith. He is the Father of all who believe in the one and only true God, and in his Son, Jesus Christ. That ram that took the place of Abraham's son, Isaac, is also Jesus. It represented the Lamb of God being sacrificed for us.

Like Abraham, God has taken his only begotten son and offered him up for our salvation. Imagine it! An act that we would most likely find impossible to carry out in order to show our faith in God, or our love, God himself has done for us. How can we ever doubt, even for a fleeting instant, that God does not love us?

God has allowed his only son to be taken out of his heaven and given up his life for us. My God, what a God we have! God believes we are worth such a sacrifice.

And that provides us with something to think about this Lent, as we evaluate our trust in God and our love for one another. Do we have faith enough to do the tough things God asks of us -- loving unconditionally, forgiving, showing mercy, persevering in times of trial, being generous -- even when it doesn't make much sense to us, even when we would rather do just about anything else?

Dear friends: This is the time that calls upon us to show our faith in God. This is the Season of Lent when we are told it is time, we prove our love for Christ and for the least of our brothers and sisters.

What we choose to do or not do during this Lent, and what we refrain from doing, just might symbolize how much we trust in God. Abraham trusted in God, and even when he did not understand, Abraham was willing to give up his son for God. God did give up his only Son for us.

Now it is our turn. How much do we trust God? What are we willing to give up? To give up for God?

With trust in God, I hope it is something beautiful.

Abraham loved and trusted; he offered Isaac as an act of sacrificial love, and a spiritual offering to God. Let us try to do the same today and in this Lenten Season. Amen.