

Second Sunday of Lent

Lent is a time of spiritual journey. An encounter with God often leads to a journey. That journey represents a new discovery in our relationship with God. This encounter rewards a blessing in our lives. Today's reading brings a blessing of God in our lives when we trust in God.

When God told Abraham to leave home, God was asking a lot of him. The world was not a global village then. Travel wasn't easy; there were no planes, taxis, or hotels. Furthermore, leaving home was a decisive break with all the goods of home, because going back for a visit was difficult or just out of the question entirely. So, leaving home then was a loss that we can't imagine well anymore, in our era of video calls and texting.

Still, when God told Abraham to leave, Abraham went. The author lists five blessings in this account which is a divine providence.

Why did he go? Presumably because he wanted what God offered him. If Abraham left, God told him, then he would become a great nation, his name would be great, blessings to those who bless him and curse to those who curse him, and all the communities of the earth would find blessing in him. That is a fairly stunning reward.

So, Abraham, who had a great desire for that reward, obeyed God, left what was familiar and beloved to him, and wandered off as a stranger in a strange land.

And then notice what happened.

Abraham lived a very long time after this promise of God's and he stayed faithful to God's commands his whole life. But by the time Abraham died, this is all Abraham had: one son to carry on his posterity under this promise and two grandchildren. By anybody's estimation, this is a very small family. Certainly, one son and two grandsons is not a great nation.

Furthermore, hardly any communities knew Abraham at all, let alone found a blessing in him. The idea that all the communities of the earth would find blessings in Abraham really would have been completely laughable at that time, wouldn't it?

Of course, as we now see it, all Jews, Christians, and Muslims are the Abrahamic peoples. Many great nations are included among the Abrahamic peoples. All of them know Abraham and think that they find blessing in Abraham.

And so, God's stunning promise to Abraham has been completely fulfilled.

But Abraham did not live to see it. He had to take the fulfillment of God's promise to him on faith.

So maybe Abraham is the father of faith because he was willing to stake his life on a promise whose fulfillment did not come in his lifetime on earth.

In this, he is not only the patriarch of the family of faith, but also a pattern to follow for all those in his family.

Whenever God asks us to move into the future and deepen our relationship with him, we are accompanied by blessings only God can provide. I personally see in myself the more I deepen my relationship with God, what a blessing I get in my life.