

The Second Sunday of Lent

We don't talk a lot about covenants today, but we should. Covenants are one of the most important themes in the Bible—they are the key to God's redemptive plan to restore humanity to its divine calling.

What is a covenant? A covenant is a relationship between two partners who make binding promises to each other and work together to reach a common goal. They're often accompanied by oaths, signs, and ceremonies. Covenants define obligations and commitments, but they are different from a contract because they are relational and personal. Think of a marriage—a husband and wife choose to enter into a formal relationship, binding themselves to one another in lifelong faithfulness and devotion. They then work as partners to reach a common goal, like building a life or raising children together.

The covenant can be made between individuals, between parties and between nations. There is no consensus in the number of covenants in the bible. Basically, there are five covenants in the bible. Today's readings bring up one of the covenantal relationships.

One of the aspects of a covenant is to have witness. It could be a person, a signed document, blood or blessing.

The first reading is prefigured with Jesus' death. If you can read the whole chapter of Genesis 22, we will be able to understand how this covenant reflects the promises God made for salvation.

The common place of covenant or test happened in the mountains. Mount Moriah, a high mountain for transfiguration, and Mount Calvary. Three or the third day has been repeated in the incidents. On the third day, Abraham reached the mountain. Jesus took Peter, James, and John. About three in the afternoon, Jesus breathed last. On the third day, he rose from the dead.

The second aspect of covenant is to have a test to develop trust. Today's first reading and the gospel are the perfect example for deeper trust and testing.

In the first reading Abraham was asked to give his only son; his long awaited son. That was a big test of trust. If you happen to watch the movie, "His Only Son", there is a conversation between Abraham and Sarah before they took off on the journey. She says to him, "Make sure that there is no harm to our son". This is the time the mother was put to test and having to trust.

The same thing happened with Mary in the New Testament when Simeon, the prophet, held baby Jesus told in the temple. (Luke 2: 34-35, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted ³⁵ (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Transfiguration in the gospel is another proven event witnessed by the disciples to see the redemption of mankind. He was the beloved son, loved by God and given back to humanity. This is how God reveals the nature of his love to the people.

God never breaks his covenant. He promised Abraham that his descendants will be blessed generation after generation. We are blessed through Jesus and his everlasting covenant, even today after so many generations. We are reminded in the blood of the new and everlasting covenant when we hear the Eucharistic Prayer.

People of Israel broke the covenant many times. Still God rebuilds the covenant through various people and finally with his only son Jesus.

How do we make covenant today?

This life is given as a gift. Your family is given as a gift of blessing. There are a lot of things given to us as a blessing. This is how God makes covenant with us. How do we want to give it back? Maybe:

1. Be grateful to God for all the blessings.
2. Share your blessings in whatever way you can.

I challenge you to think about what blessings God has given you and how you can share.

Participating and celebrating the Eucharist is another way to make the covenant. Try this week to go to Mass everyday to renew the covenant with Jesus, or attend times of Eucharistic adoration this week. By doing so, you too may be witness to the everlasting glory of God and his wonderful covenant relationship with us right in our very midst.