

2nd Sunday of Lent
February 28, 2021
“Control or Surrender?”

Gen 22:1...18
Rom 8:31-34
Mk 9:2-10

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Sooner or later, we all must give up control of our life. No matter who we are, there are some things over which we have no control. Ultimately, we must let go of life completely with our death. We might not do this willingly, but death will overtake us at some point no matter how strongly or courageously we resist it.

Life always makes great demands on us. We start in one direction and then, often, have to change course or even go back to where we started. Sometimes, we are forced into certain behaviors because of real obligations to family, friends, or loved ones – and, sometimes, by things like the plague of Covid-19!

Most people adjust and adapt pretty well to life’s demands when they are compelled to give up control – And, usually, we find a blessing in our willingness to sacrifice for another, when it is required!

However, perhaps the greatest challenge that we will ever face is when we must sacrifice something we do or something we love because God asks it of us. For example, we discover something we assumed to be legitimate to be contrary to the Gospel or to God’s Commandments. We might be required by government law to do something we know is wrong – For it is against what God requires of us – like respect for all human life, respect for human biology, human procreation, personal integrity, and mercy toward all people.

Abraham was asked to do the worst possible thing that anyone could imagine. God asked him to sacrifice his son, Isaac, in a holocaust. Isaac was the son of promise – He was the son Abraham and Sarah had awaited for scores of years – He was to father a great nation in Abraham’s line.

The sacrifice of a human child was not uncommon in those days. The pagans, sometimes, did this, hoping to appease their false gods. However, Abraham worshiped the one, true God. It did not seem possible that God would make that demand of him. But God did!

However, it was only a test – a test to determine the absolute fidelity of Abraham to God. It was the ultimate test of surrender to let God control his life. Abraham passed that test – and from him would come the Chosen People and the Savior of the World!

Jesus was someone who never resisted the call and the will of his Father. In contrast, we often resist whatever requires the surrender of the control over our life. And whenever we do so, we pay a price if it was truly something that God was asking of us.

Jesus went up the mountain with the three disciples to experience a marvelous theophany – a revelation and manifestation of God. The glory of God shone through Jesus. He was transfigured into what is promised to each of us if we are faithful. The disciples were given a mind and soul-changing vision of what awaits every human being who is truly faithful to God.

Moses and Elijah were sent by the Father to discuss what awaited Jesus – which was the kind of death he would undergo. Moses was the great lawgiver of the Old Testament, and Elijah, perhaps, the greatest prophet. Both of these men eventually learned to give the absolute control of their lives over to God in the surrender of faith. One of the commentators on this scripture observed that when we give over the control of our life to God, we receive it back as grace!

Brothers and Sisters, every Christian disciple must surrender the control of their life to God. Unfortunately, many other entities try to control them instead – the culture, our society, the media, the advertisers, and even the government with its sometimes ungodly laws! Nevertheless, God must always come first. What God speaks to our heart, what Jesus says in the Gospel, what the Holy Spirit tells us in quiet prayer – that is what we must do and believe. Anything contrary is to relinquish the control that belongs to God alone!

Fortunately, the words of St. Paul to the Romans can provide us with great encouragement and hope. Paul exclaims, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” Truly, if God gave up His Son to death on our behalf, what could not be in our favor? What can impede us from all that God has planned for us?

So, let us pray, today, that we let only God control our lives and our hearts – so that we receive the grace of interior freedom here – and the grace of eternal life hereafter!

Amen.

February 28, 2021

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