

2nd Sunday of Lent
March 17, 2019
“Beyond Routine and Complacency”

Gen 15:5...18

Phil 3:17-4:1

Lk 9:28-36

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Most of us live our lives with a certain amount of routine. Routine makes it easier for us to get many things done. It ensures that certain things are not overlooked or forgotten. In fact, if someone or something interrupts our routine, it is very easy to pass over and skip something that is very important.

However, routine can have drawbacks. It can lead to boredom because our task or our life loses creative energy. It can also lead to complacency, wherein we fail to see or adapt to something creative or new. It can also lead to completely discounting something life-changing because our complacency has made us lazy.

All the readings for today challenge us with respect to our religious routines and to the complacency that can creep into our personal faith. They remind us that our relationship with God can never become routine – That God continually challenges us to do more and to be different than we have been in the past.

The Book of Genesis presents us with Abraham whose life had been anything but routine. God had called him to leave family and country – all that was routine and familiar – and become the father of the Chosen People in a far off land. Consequently, Abraham would journey far and wide throughout much of what is now the Middle East. He underwent many dangers and hardships. He made many mistakes. But he never lost his faith in God.

In today’s passage, after desperately questioning God over his lack of progeny and lifetime of wandering, God gave Abraham an almost terrifying sign and sealed the covenant. The smoking pot and flaming torch passing between the halved animal carcasses was a Middle Eastern way of saying: “May I be rent asunder if I break my Covenant with you!” For his part, Abraham would have to continue to journey in faith and trust in God!

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus takes his closest friends up the mountain.

Thus, he began to shake them out of who and what they thought he was and what his Messiahship entailed.

On that mountain, Jesus was transfigured. The glory of God shone through him. Clearly, Jesus had a divine side to himself. There, he spoke to Moses and Elijah who became present. Moses was the great lawgiver of the Old Testament, while Elijah was, perhaps, the greatest prophet. Both were resisted and rejected. Both had to flee for their lives. Both were never complacent about anything – and both lived lives that were far from routine. They spoke to Jesus about his exodus – about his journey from a hostile world – into a better life in the kingdom of God! They spoke to Jesus about the suffering and death he would undergo in order to make that transition. Nevertheless, there would be a glorification on the other side!

The three disciples were told to listen to Jesus. Jesus would begin to speak of his suffering and death. He would begin to teach them of the necessity of taking up their own cross and following him. They would not be seated at his right or left hand in any earthly kingdom. And the kingdom of Israel would never be what Jesus came to restore. Instead, he came to inaugurate the kingdom and the reign of God!

St. Paul teaches us that his Jewish contemporaries were missing who Jesus was and what could be theirs because of routine and complacency. They thought that if they kept the food laws of the Torah, and were circumcised, all would be well between them and God. Unfortunately, they were focused upon earthly, human things and not what God was speaking to their hearts or asking them to become!

Brothers and Sisters, while routines are important, they must never keep us from stepping out of them and answering the call of God. It's wonderful to know that we have been baptized and redeemed by Jesus our Savior – But we must never fall into the trap of a complacency that thinks that now “we have it made”. Because being a disciple means accepting the suffering and the crosses that are part of everyone's existence who lives and walks with Jesus. Being a disciple means that we will be surprised again and again over what God asks of us.

So, let us pray, that during this Lent, we can acquire the faith of Moses, Elijah, the three disciples, and Jesus himself – as we journey toward the kingdom that he has promised.

Amen.

March 17, 2019

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