

Reflection for the 2nd Sunday of Lent

There is a little acronym that is used in various places called KISS. To some it means: **Keep It Simple Sweetie** or better for today, **Keep It Simple Sister**.

The readings for this Sunday are 3 of my favorites. In the first reading from Genesis, Abraham is called twice- before he goes up the mountain and when he is about to sacrifice his son. In both cases he answers: "Here I am." Now, I usually think of that response as "Here I am, I come to do your will." The emotion of the story told in this first reading from Genesis is tremendous. The call to Abraham asks for the great love foretold in the sacrifice of God giving God's only son, Jesus. The second reading is short and equally powerful with a simple statement: "If God is for us, who can be against us? This reading is full of questions that readily engage our faith and courage: how will God not also give us everything else along with the sacrifice of the only son. The Gospel reading has Peter's declaration: "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here." Those simple statements are food for hours of meditation and rejoicing in God the Creator's extravagant love and I could sit down now---but not yet... **God is Faithful**

In the readings and Sr. Evelyn's reflection of last week, we were challenged to look at the great covenant love that God has for us from the time of Noah and into this very day. We continue with the same theme in the readings for the second Sunday of Lent but at a more personal level. The God of All calls us to respond just as Abraham, and the Romans that Paul was instructing, and Jesus' own apostles were called to open their hearts to more, to greater fleshiness and flexibility.

I was studying some interpretations of that first reading where Abraham is called to sacrifice his only son Isaac. When God called Abraham, Abraham's response is: "Here I am!" The word "hineni" is an expression of unconditional availability. No ifs, ands, or buts- whatever you want. Then the Genesis writer says so lovingly: Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love- the dramatic flair is building. Note that when they reached the site of the sacrifice, "Isaac carried the wood on his

back.” I had not noticed in prior times of hearing this passage how this statement forecasts Jesus’ sacrifice. It is truly a prefiguring of Christ carrying the wood of the cross. Again as God calls Abraham to stop the killing of Isaac, that phrase of unconditional availability, “Here I am.” God’s covenant is real in Abraham’s life. Abraham could go to that length for God because he knew and believed that God is faithful.

When Paul explains in three short verses the outrageous power of God’s love for us to “not spare God’s only son and to hand him over for us all.” We can be dumbstruck with love. I hear words about the love, I think or meditate about that love and I can hardly take it in or wrap my mind around it. Maybe, that is the problem, this love is of intense feeling not just thought. It takes an open and supple heart to take it in. To breathe and allow God’s great love to wash over me may be what is lacking. To come to the tiniest understanding of God’s immense love for each of us, we must be still, we must be silent, and we must take time.

In the movie “The shack” the portrayals of the persons of the Trinity were delightful. The spirit was a young woman who was moving and like a sprite of the wind. Jesus was not terribly different than we might imagine and sooo understanding. But God the creator was a gorgeous, ample black woman, who portrayed the mercy, kindness and unimaginable patient love for the poor human character. She was constantly calling the man in the story to let her heal his broken heart; to believe that God’s love is simple. If God is for us, WHO can be against us? for God is faithful.

I wonder what Jesus says to Peter, James and John to call them aside, “hey guys let’s go climb a mountain.” Did they wonder if this would be the event that would make everything that Jesus was doing make sense in the framework of their past experience. We know that they were scared half to death when the vision began. We are told that they were so terrified that Peter hardly knew what to say. And true to human weak form, since they did not run away-they offered to do something useful

and construct some shelter or put up some tents. Those three tough men who knew how to face violent storms and fight squirming fish were beside themselves. They had a tremendous experience of light and vision that they could not have anticipated. They fell down in fear.

One final note that my research educated me on. Jesus is speaking with Moses and Elijah. I often wondered why those two? If you look at the picture on the front of Give Us This Day, you see the symbols Elijah and Moses are holding, fire and the commandments. These two figures are symbols of the Prophets and the Law. But what does the voice in cloud say but: “This is My Beloved Son. Listen to him.” This is the new Law in the person of Jesus. The old ways are superseded by the Jesus’ way and the Good News. When they are coming down the mountain we find out about their quandary—what does it mean to rise from the dead. Those poor apostles must have been so confused so often. We learn today from Abraham, from Paul and from Jesus; be ready to give all, God is with us, and Jesus’ Word will lead us to new life. We must be ready to follow His call in whatever incidental ways it comes, for God is faithful

Sometimes when we feel lost or afraid or even just tired, it would do well to remember the short statements of these readings.

Here I am Lord—what ever you ask---- and keep breathing

If God is for us, who can be against....and keep breathing.

This is my beloved Son, Listen to him.and take in the breath of God.

Sister Shelly Farabaugh

