

## HOMILY 2<sup>ND</sup> SUN LENT YRB 2018

In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the King of Bavaria's name was King Henry III. The King became tired of all of his responsibilities and the pressures of international politics, so he decided to make an application to the leader of the local monastery to be accepted there. He wanted to spend the rest of his life in prayer and meditation. The monk to whom he applied told him: "Your Majesty, do you understand that the pledge here is one of obedience. That will be hard for you since you have been a king." The King responded: "I understand. The rest of my life I will be obedient to you, as Christ leads you." The monk responded: "Then I will tell you what to do. Go back to your throne and serve faithfully in the place where God has put you." I am certain that that is not what he wanted to hear, but that is exactly what he the King did. Sometimes when we seek to do God's will in our lives, when we figure out what that is, we sometimes do not want to do it. Frequently we can do what God is calling us to do without making big changes. Maybe it is doing what you are doing with greater love. Sometimes carrying out our responsibilities day after day with greater love, is the most difficult thing we do.

In the first reading, Abraham was called by God to do something he did not want to do. God told Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac. Abraham was willing to do God's will and he made a plan to do just that. Of course God stopped Abraham before he sacrificed his son Isaac, so the story has a happy ending. And God made him the father of many nations. Something very good came out of something that appeared very bad. You could interpret this reading as God testing Abraham, but I tend to think that Abraham was testing himself. His faith was so strong that he was willing to do what was probably the most difficult thing that God could ask and trust in God that things would turn out well. This strengthened his faith and his trust in God. If he could do this he could do anything with God.

In the Gospel reading we have another mountaintop experience, an account of the Transfiguration. I wonder what Peter, James and John thought when Jesus asked them to climb the mountain. They may have been thinking that climbing a mountain is hard. Can't we just do it down here? Climbing the mountain is hard work, but sometimes we have a different perspective from the top of the mountain. Sometimes we have to do some hard work to gain a new perspective. Now the transfiguration was a great experience. Peter thought it was so good that he wanted to stay there. But it only lasted a few moments and then they had to go back to their lives. God revealed himself to Peter, James and John as a sign that they should continue what they were doing as disciples. This experience strengthened their faith in Jesus.

Sometimes we have these epiphanies in our lives. They may not be as dramatic as the transfiguration, but God wants to communicate with you. They may be a strong sense of God's presence, a message that comes to us in a dream, an intuition that God is leading you in a particular direction, or a sense that God is calling you to do something when it does not necessarily make logical sense. A few things we need to remember about epiphanies. You cannot create them, they are a gift from God, but you must be open to them. Secondly, we cannot become focused on the experience. Just like Peter, James and John in the Gospel reading today, you have to get on with your life. But we should allow the epiphany experience to change us in some way. Maybe like King Henry the change you want to make is not right for you. Maybe you need to stick with what you are doing. Maybe like Abraham you are called to do something very difficult and trust that God will bring you to a good place. Maybe like Peter, James and John, you need to continue on the path you have chose. What is God's message to you?