

FEBRUARY 25, 2018



SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT



GENESIS 22:1-2, 9A, 10-13, 15-18

PSALM 116:10, 15, 16-17, 18-19

ROMANS 8:31B-34

MARK 9:2-10

REFLECTION

We know the plot well: God asks Abraham to sacrifice his son. Abraham takes Isaac to the mountain, ties him up, and just as Abraham is about to sacrifice Isaac, an angel stops him. God promises that his descendants will be as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sands on the shore. But what happens if we read between the lines? Put yourself in Abraham's shoes. You and Sarah have wanted a child for so long. When God tells you that you will have a son, your first reaction is to laugh in disbelief. When he is born, you name him Isaac (the Hebrew word for "he laughs"). You watch as he takes his first steps, speaks his first word, and grows into a young man.

One day, God asks the unfathomable. God asks you to kill Isaac as a sacrificial offering. The miraculous child God promised to you, despite the odds and despite your old age. The child who brought you unimaginable joy. Your little boy. The questions arise in you: *Why would God give me this child and then take him away from me? What will Sarah say when she finds out? How am I going to do this?* And now, here you are. Father and son, together at the appointed place. You build the altar, arranging the wood carefully. Isaac is confused. "Where is the sheep for the offering?" You know the answer. You bind him with rope. He struggles to break free, straining against his bonds as you place him on the altar. He is crying, pleading, "Daddy, what are you doing? Let me go!" Hands trembling, you raise the knife over your son, tears blurring your vision. Just as you are about to do the unthinkable, an angel stops you and tells you that you have proven your fear of God by your willingness to sacrifice your precious child. The knife falls to the ground with a clatter. Your shaking fingers struggle to untie the knots binding your son. You hold him close, rocking him back and forth. You whisper over and over, "I love you, I love you, I love you." Because of this harrowing experience, you are blessed. You become the father of three faiths (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam). God recognizes your obedience and the reward is beyond compare.

ACTION

This week, take some time to use your imagination in prayer. Use today's Gospel story (the Transfiguration) as a starting point.

JOURNALING QUESTION

● How might the reflection above invite you to think about the Scriptures in a new way?