

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

The readings we have just heard, remind us of the importance of remaining faithful to God and to the mission which has been entrusted to us by Jesus, through our baptism.

In the first reading, we see how God enters into a covenant with Abraham. It is a contract, if you like, but a contract with a difference. God is wanting a loving relationship with his people and through Abraham is willing to offer his people what they most desire. 'To your descendants, I give this land... It is not just a covenant with Abraham at that point in history, but a covenant for all time, for generations to come.... God wants to enter into a loving relationship with his people, with each one of us and he will bless us, not just in our lifetime but for generations to come. What he asks, in return, is our faithfulness, like the faithfulness of Abraham, our resolve to follow him more closely each day.

In the Psalm we are reminded of the need to be faithful.

I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness
In the land of the living.
Hope in him, hold firm and take heart.
Hope in the Lord!

Again, in the Second Reading, St Paul reminds the early Church and therefore, reminds each one of us that,

'Our homeland is in heaven, and from heaven comes the saviour we are waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body.do not give way but remain faithful in the Lord.'

It is a reminder that, as good as and as necessary as material things are, as Christians, we are called, in baptism, to follow Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life – and nothing is more important than that. So, what is it that we are called to do?

'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.'(Matthew 28) This is known as 'The Great Commission' and comes right at the end of Matthew's Gospel.

As Fr Gerard said last week,

Pope Francis at the time of his election said, "A Church which doesn't have the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ as the foundation of its life and purpose will be swept away like grains of sand"

Jesus calls us first and foremost to **make disciples**. The *going*, the *baptising*, and the *teaching* flow from the mission to *make disciples*. For Jesus, 'Making Disciple's is the priority and lies at the heart of the *Great Commission*.

In another talk that I listened to, earlier this week, I was reminded that 'The whole of Christ's mission was to reveal who God is and who we can become.

So, we are called to make disciples and, like Jesus, reveal who God is and who we can become – which brings me to the Gospel Reading from Luke.

Jesus takes three of his most trusted companions and goes away to pray, to spend time with his Father in heaven. During this experience of being with God, he is transformed, transfigured. His divine nature is revealed. The fact that he is the Son of God is made known, even if it is not fully understood by the disciples. St Paul tells us that we too, will be transfigured, for, by virtue of our baptism, we are sons and daughters of God, our Father. Jesus is our brother.

The disciples failed to understand what they were witnessing. Throughout history, the people of God failed to keep the covenant offered by God which is why God made such covenants with Noah and with Moses, as well as Abraham. We too, fail, which is why we should profit from this Lenten period in the Church's year to focus again on God, our loving and merciful Father and redouble our efforts to be the person that he wants us to be.

When I began work here, in September, I discovered many wonderful things about this Parish. It is an amazing Parish with many dedicated 'missionary' minded members. I realised that the questions '**What have I done for Christ?**', '**What am I doing for Christ?**' had, in part at least, been answered. There are many things which go on in the Parish which reach out, to a huge number of people in our Parish Community and further afield. It makes a real difference in the lives of so many people. I was 'blown away' by the generosity of people during the Advent appeal, when so many of you shared what you had with others. I see the work that is done, on a daily basis, to ensure that those who come to the shelter have a clean bed, food to eat and clothes to wear. So many good, generous things happen in this Parish, but the temptation for all of us, is to think it is enough.

We avoid the question '**What more can I do for Christ?**' Four years ago, now, I had a very full-time job in central London. Apart from the job, which was demanding, I also spent up to three hours a day travelling to and from work. I told myself that even if I wanted to, there wasn't time in my life to do more in the Parish – but then, I received a text message from Father – and here I am!!

Peter says to Jesus, 'Master, it is wonderful for us to be here; so, let us make three tents, one for you one for Moses and one for Elijah.' What he wants to do is a good thing. He recognises that something important is happening/has happened. It is as if he is looking at the situation, wanting to preserve it because he sees that it is something good.

But God wants more.... He wants more from the disciples, he wants more from us. It isn't enough for us to look at what is happening in our Parish, know that it is good and think that there is no more to be done. How will God be revealed to each person in my life if I do nothing more? What the disciples are glimpsing is the divine nature of Jesus. They are thrown into darkness and confusion, but God says to them, 'This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him.' If we want to be closer to God, if God is important in our lives, we must listen

to his Son, Jesus, who, having lived as one of us, shows us how to truly become children of God.

This is God's invitation to each one of us. He is constantly inviting us into a deeper, more personal relationship. He wants to create a covenant with each of us, with every single human being, as he did with Abraham.

We have here, some very beautiful banners.

If we look at the one in the centre, can we allow Jesus to gaze lovingly upon us? Can we return that gaze? What is your response, as you realise that Jesus loves you unconditionally? **What more are you willing to do for Jesus**, in response to that love?

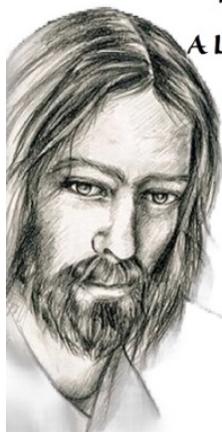
Perhaps you don't know the answer to that question yet, but there is an invitation for you to come along to the Parish Lenten Reflection on Saturday 6th April and take some time to consider your response – perhaps that is the 'more' that God is wanting from you, this Lent. Perhaps you will come to the Parish Retreat during the week beginning 8th April, for the same purpose. Perhaps it will give you the opportunity to discover the reason why God has chosen YOU and the FRUIT that he wants you to bear, or, to put it another way the purpose that he has in mind for YOU. Are you willing to put aside some time, during this Lent, to focus, again, on Jesus, to make your 'home' in him, as he makes his in you?

We, like the disciples, might be very surprised at how much God can achieve through us, if we but cooperate with him. If each person here were to do 'one more thing' for Jesus, in response to his love for us, how many more people in the world would become aware of 'who God is and who we can become?' Then we really would become the 'missionary disciples' that Jesus commissioned at the end of Matthew's Gospel. Then we really would proclaim the Good News that God loves us. Then we really would be evangelisers in the truest sense of the word.

It is both a challenge and an invitation... How will you respond?

St Anselm's Catholic Church
In the Parish Centre

A Lenten Reflection



**What it
means
to
follow
Jesus
today.....**

Evangelisation@ St Anselm's

Saturday 6th April 2019
10.00 a.m. -12.00 p.m.