

Welcome

to St Andrew's
Cathedral,
Dundee

&

Our Lady
of Good Counsel,
Broughty Ferry

LENT 2021

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Second Sunday of Lent

28 February 2021

Next Sunday: Third Sunday in Lent

Year of Mark (B)



There in their presence he was transfigured

Abraham's and God's Beloved Sons

How long Abraham had waited for a son! Through this son, the promise made to him by God would be fulfilled, and he would become the father of a great nation, with descendants “as numerous as the grains of sand on the Seashore.....” yet this Sunday in the Old Testament reading, we find the God who made the promise seemingly asking him to give the firstborn back.

The story of the binding of Isaac in this text is a masterpiece of Old Testament narrative. In this Sunday's version the story is condensed; when it is read at the great Vigil of Easter it is heard in full. This story can seem very disturbing. Human sacrifice was common in the desert religions of Abraham's time (about 1850 years before Christ), but the question remains: What kind of God would require a man to sacrifice his own son? Of course, we see by the end of the story that it is not the sacrifice of Isaac that God wants but the sacrifice of Abraham's heart.

The Abraham story begins in Chapter 12 of Genesis and is well worth reading as the story of the pre-history of Israel. The biblical writers, putting together the ancient stories in written form from about 1000BC (an oral passing on of the stories being the method of keeping the tradition alive prior to this) push back the people's understanding of God as Saviour/Rescuer —expressed most fulsomely at the Exodus— right to the ancestral history of the people in the time of Abraham and Isaac. In Genesis 12 Abraham is an old man who encounters this God, who gives him a challenge - “Leave your country for the land I will show you” and makes him three promises — descendants *as many as the grains of sand*, a *promised land* in which to dwell, and divine protection - *I will be with you* - a continuous biblical refrain! So Abraham left Haran with all its security and set out on a journey to the land/life that God had promised him. He obeyed God simply because he believed God's promises.

Abraham's great desire was to have a son – his son who would begin the “descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven”. But both he and Sarah were advanced in years. So he tries to solve the problem in his own way, and produces a son by a slave girl. This does not prove to work out very well, and both the slave and her son are sent away. Next God intervenes, works a miracle, and causes the elder Sarah to conceive and bear a son. Isaac, then, is not only the legitimate first-born son of Abraham, but really his last hope. There is absolutely nothing more precious to Abraham than his son. Indeed, to give up his son would be to give up himself.

This clues us in to the understanding of sacrifice in the ancient world religions. The deity deserves everything because he has given us everything. As I said above, human sacrifice was not uncommon in the pagan religions of the time – the offering of the firstborn was seen as the only adequate worship of the gods responsible for our very existence. In Genesis 22 - in the reading today—God stops Abraham before he kills his son. He does not want human sacrifice. The ordeal was a test to see if Abraham was truly devoted to God in faith, obedience and gratitude. **God does not want Isaac's blood . . . only Abraham's heart.** So he provides a substitute, the ram in the thicket.

The image of Isaac carrying the wood for the sacrifice up the slope of the mountain of Moriah gives us a sign that this story points beyond itself to a future sacrifice beyond all understanding. The ram caught in the thicket is not the true substitute, and the true sacrifice does not take place upon Moriah. It is the Lamb, not the ram, God's Son, not Abraham's, that is offered. Like Isaac, Jesus carried the wood of the sacrifice up the slope of Calvary. But unlike Isaac, he did so freely, knowing what that sacrifice would cost him. And his sacrifice accomplishes what no animal sacrifice could possibly accomplish – the eternal salvation of all who are willing to accept this free gift of love.



God was using
Abraham to talk
about the future...

**GOD WILL
PROVIDE
THE LAMB**

Jesus is the true
Lamb of God

This is what the whole biblical story is about. From Genesis to Revelation, the theme is the astonishing love of God. The love of the Father for his Incarnate Word: “This is my Son, the Beloved”, God the Father tells Peter and James and John (and us!) in the Gospel for the Second Sunday of Lent. This is the revelation of divine love par excellence: the love of the Father who sacrifices that beloved Son for us; the love of the Son who leaves behind the brilliant cloud of the mountain-top for the agony of Calvary, he who is the **Lamb of God**. Though it is we who owe everything to God, it is he who sacrifices everything for us. Our love for him can only be a faint echo of his undying love for us. As St Paul reminds us today: “God did not spare his own Son but gave him up to benefit us all, we can be certain, after such a gift that he will not refuse anything he can give”.

Lent invites us to make sacrifices in our own lives, to renew and deepen our dedication to God and express that dedication by sacrificing something meaningful to us as we embark on a regime of prayer, fasting and giving. After identifying Jesus as his beloved Son on the mountaintop the Father gives us a very clear command. He says “*Listen to Him!*”. When the Gospel is proclaimed, it is Christ himself who speaks, offering us the light of the transfiguration to guide us on our journey of Lent, which can be a journey of transformation for us, even in a year like this.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

I remembered last Sunday, that in days long gone that the First Sunday of Lent would have heralded the start of Forty Hours' Adoration, Quarant' Ore, in the Cathedral, and then it would have taken place in Churches throughout the city, in order of age, with Our Lady of Good Counsel on the Sunday after Easter. Today it would have been taking place in Forebank! Here's an excerpt from an old Dunkeld Cathedral Directory:

THE FORTY HOURS ADORATION

1st Sunday of Lent - - -	St. Andrew's Cathedral, Dundee.
2nd Sunday of Lent - - -	Our Lady of Victories, Dundee.
3rd Sunday of Lent - - -	The Immac. Conception, Dundee.
4th Sunday of Lent - - -	St. Joseph's, Dundee.
1st Sunday of Passiontide - -	St. Patrick's, Dundee.
2nd Sunday of Passiontide - -	Saints Peter and Paul, Dundee.
Low Sunday - - -	Our Lady of Good Counsel, Broughty Ferry, and St. John's, Perth.
2nd Sunday after Easter - -	St. Teresa's, Dundee.
3rd Sunday after Easter - -	St. Vincent's, Dundee.
4th Sunday after Easter - -	St. Francis', Dundee.
5th Sunday after Easter - -	St. Pius X, Dundee.
Sunday after the Ascension - -	St. Clement's, Dundee.
Pentecost Sunday - - -	St. Leonard's, Dundee, and Monifieth.
Trinity Sunday - - -	Our Lady of Sorrows, Fintry, Dundee.

Our Prayers

for those who are sick:

John McCarry, Margaret McMenemy, Helen Elder, Isobel Blackmore, Robert Marshall, Peter McLaren, Karen Dammer, Katie Shephard, Mel Caullay, Bill Boland, Maria Robertson, Tony Beck, Allison Matthew; Jackey Forrest-Moore, Catherine Gallacher, Baby Ben Welsh, Thinley Chodron, Sharon McInally, Natalia Lucka, Benedict Stephens, Gillian Steedman, Steven Kennedy, Aubrey McMullan, Sonya Rostan, Lily Jane Douglas, Alexander McNeil, Bridie Mossey, Sheila McCallum, Marie Manunga,

for those who have died recently:

Kathleen Key, Mary Malloch;

those whose anniversaries fall at this time:

Alexander Fordyce, Felim Dougherty, Bernard Cooper. Jack Wilson, Jean and Albert Rodgers, Gretta Quinn, Frank Chaplain, Joseph McGarry, Teresa Coyle, Charlotte McGinness, Sandy Berry, David Stewart, Katherine Whyte, Annie Golden, Letitia Lebonnois, Jacqueline Paine, Teresa Haughey.

latest news

Re-Opening of Places of Worship

While preparing this newsletter, the Tuesday 23 February statement of the First Minister is being given. It seems that places of worship will be able to reopen for worship with limited numbers of people - most likely twenty maximum - from Easter Monday 5 April, though there is some speculation that we may be able to open a little earlier than that date. I'll keep you posted of the details for reopening. Given the expected serious restrictions on numbers being able to assemble for our liturgies, gathering together will not be without its challenges, so I will need to beg your patience and understanding as we do our best for the people across our parishes.

Bishop Vincent Logan's *Month's Mind* Mass Friday 26 February at 12noon

On the day which would have been Bishop Vincent's 40th Anniversary of Episcopal Ordination for the Diocese of Dunkeld, an occasion which many of us remember with great pride and fondness, the *Month's Mind* Mass marking his death will be celebrated in the Convent Chapel at Lawside.

Because of the restrictions still in place, it is not a public event. It will however be livestreamed via the diocesan website www.dunkelldiocese.org.uk

We have recently discovered a recording of the **homily** which Bishop Vincent gave at the Mass to celebrate his 25th Anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood in March 1989. It is an inspirational address and it will be posted on the Cathedral Facebook page this **Friday 26 February** in honour of Bishop Vincent.

I shall celebrate **Vespers** for the Second Sunday of Lent this Sunday afternoon in Our Lady of Good Counsel.

I invite you to join me in spirit.

The Vespers Liturgy for the Second Sunday of Lent is attached.

There will be a Zoom Service of this year's **World Day of Prayer** on **Friday 5 March** at 2pm.

For joining details see WDP Website (www.wdpscotland.org.uk) or WDP Scotland Facebook page or use the Zoom link: **Webinar ID: 895 9398 3883.**

Passcode: 901656.

If you do not have Internet access you can join using a landline 0131 4601196. You will be asked for the above webinar ID and passcode. There may be costs involved, but the Service will be under 1 hour. The service will then be posted on the website and Facebook page for later access.

KEEPING THIS SUNDAY HOLY WITH A HOME LITURGY

A prayer to begin

Countless as the stars, O God of Abraham,
are the faithful whom
you have led into the land of promise.

Dazzling as the snow,
O God of Moses and Elijah
is your glory shining on the face of Jesus,
who forever prays on our behalf,
the people for whom he accomplishes
the exodus of the resurrection.

It is good for us to be here!
Let us listen always to your Son,
the chosen One,
so that we may have a share
in Christ's transfigured glory,
when he will make all things
subject to himself. Amen.

A Penitential Litany

Lord Jesus, transfigured!
you live in the light of the Father.
When we choose to walk in the shadow of sin,
forgive us, Lord.

Lord Jesus, transfigured!
Moses and Elijah testify to you.
When we neglect to follow
the testimony of your prophets,
both ancient and contemporary,
forgive us, Lord.

Lord Jesus, transfigured!
you are the beloved Son of your Father.
When we refuse to listen to your voice,
forgive us, Lord.

May almighty God have mercy on us.
Through his forgiveness,
may he transfigure our poverty into his riches,
our misery into his glory
and may he bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

Read the Scriptures of the day

The Book of Genesis: 22:1-2.9-13.15-18.
Abraham, our father in faith.

Our response: Psalm 115

**I will walk in the presence of the Lord
in the land of the living.**

The letter of St Paul to the Romans: 8:31-34
God did not spare his own Son.

The Gospel of Mark: 9:2-10
The is my Son, the Beloved.

A Hymn for this Sunday

Tune: 'Picardy' - Let all mortal flesh keep silence

Transform us, as you transfigured
stood apart on Tabor's heigh.
Lead us up our sacred mountains,
search us with revealing light
Lift us from where we have fallen ,
full of questions filled with fright.

Transform us, as you, transfigured,
once spoke with those holy ones;
we, surrounded by the witness
of these saints whose work is done,
live in this world as your body,
chosen daughters, chosen sons.

Transform us, as you, transfigured,
would not stay within a shrine.
Keep us from our great temptation,
time and truth we quickly bind.
Lead us down those daily pathways,
where our love is not confined.

Glory be to God almighty,
Father of the most loved Son
Glory be to Jesus, Saviour,
Lord of light and chosen one.
Glory to the Holy Spirit,
while eternal ages run.

Conclusion

O Lord, God our Father,
it has indeed been *good for us to be here!*
As we have listened to the voice of your Son,
at the Table of your Word,
so may we bear witness to him in the world,
and be always in communion with that love
from which nothing can separate us. Amen.

