

PEDRO ARRUIPE INSTITUTE, RAIA - GOA

REFLECTIONS ON THE SUNDAY LITURGY

28th February 2021 – Second Sunday in Lent

Gen 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18 | Rom 8:31b-34 | Mk 9:2-10

Scriptural Track: Fr. Shawn D'Souza SJ

Today is the second Sunday of lent. During the entire season of lent, God calls us to be closer to him, to experience his love, to repent and change our old ways. In the first reading, we see the whole episode of the testing of Abraham. God instructed Abraham to sacrifice his only son as a burnt offering but only wanted to test him. Abraham must have been puzzled and very much saddened at this request but nevertheless, he did what he was told to do and we all know how the Lord rescued Isaac by sending His angel to stop Abraham and provided another lamb for the offering. This sacrifice of Abraham's son is reflected in Jesus as the supreme sacrifice. God told Abraham not to sacrifice his son but God sacrificed His only son so that we may be saved. Such was the love of God for us!

Throughout the history of Israel in the Old Testament, God is by their side; protecting, providing and caring for them just as a mother hen takes her chicks under her wings. Yahweh never wants burnt offerings in return for all this, but only a contrite, faithful and loving heart. God looks at the heart of the person and not his/her physical appearance or any other rituals. The prophets reiterate this on many occasions to the people of Israel so that they might change their ways and return to the Lord. The Lord's covenant is hence, a new covenant written on the hearts of the people (Jer 31:33), a covenant not of stone but of flesh and blood (Ez 36:26). Jesus is the true personification of this covenant!

In the Gospel we have the transfiguration of Jesus, how Jesus was revealed in all His glory as the Son of God. The disciples on the other hand, miss the whole significance of the event! Peter is concerned with making three tents for Elijah and Moses but does not grasp what was happening at that moment. The transfiguration is a prelude to the resurrection and

ascension of Jesus. It gives us a glimpse of the divinity of Jesus. Here Jesus is revealed in all his glory as the Son of God just as he will be revealed on the day of the resurrection and ascension. This is the confirmation of the prophecy of the Messiah: that Jesus is truly the anointed and chosen one of God who will save us from our sins! Jesus thus becomes the new covenant, the covenant of flesh and blood, the sacrificial lamb, the saviour who will die to save us from the bondage of sin and death... He becomes the personified love of God; the 'new Isaac' sacrificed as a 'burnt offering' for our redemption. He becomes the covenant that will reside in our hearts!

We as Christians must hold on to the teachings and values of Christ. God only wants our clean, contrite and loving hearts. Can we hence make efforts this Lenten season, to amend our ways, to purge our hearts and minds of things unclean and to follow the teachings of Christ? I'm sure if God's love is so great as to sacrifice His only son for us, we in our turn can at least give him our clean, contrite and loving hearts!