

3-1-26

Processional Hymn *Lift High the Cross* #473

Refrain Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
till all the world adore his sacred Name.

- 1 Led on their way by this triumphant sign,
the hosts of God in conquering ranks combine. *Refrain*
- 2 Each new-born servant of the Crucified
bears on the brow the seal of him who died. *Refrain*
- 3 O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,
as thou hast promised, draw the world to thee. *Refrain*
- 4 So shall our song of triumph ever be:
praise to the Crucified for victory. *Refrain*

Celebrant Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

People **His mercy endures for ever.**

Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:14, 16

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence

**Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned
against you in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

The Almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you
And also with you.

Let us pray.

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lessons

Introduction: Today's lesson from Genesis and our Gospel lesson tell the story of Abraham (called Abram) and Nicodemus. Both men were challenged and surprised by God's call. These two readings are used during Lent to lead us to reflect on our own spiritual journeys and to inspire us to move beyond our comfort zones, just as Abraham and Nicodemus were inspired and responded to God's call.

A reading from Genesis

Genesis 12:1-4 JPS Version

The LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and curse him that curses you; and all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you."

Abram went forth as the LORD had commanded him, and Lot went with him.

Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills;

from where is my help to come?

My help comes from the Lord,

the maker of heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot be moved

and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.

Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel

shall neither slumber nor sleep;

The Lord himself watches over you;

the Lord is your shade at your right hand,

So that the sun shall not strike you by day,

nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve you from all evil;

it is he who shall keep you safe.

The Lord shall watch over your going out
and your coming in,

from this time forth for evermore.

Introduction:

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Church in Rome about the universal crisis that no amount of good works, and no matter how closely one follows God's Law, the gap from humanity to heaven cannot be made by our own effort. Faith is what brings us to God. Trusting God's promises is what closes the gap and makes us one with Him.

A reading from the Letter to the Romans *Romans 4:1-5, 13-17*

What can we say about Abraham, the father of our people? What did he learn about faith? If Abraham was made right by the things he did, he had a reason to boast about himself. But God knew different. That's why the Scriptures say, *"Abraham believed God, and because of this he was accepted as one who is right with God."*

When people work, their pay is not given to them as a gift. They earn the pay they get. But people cannot do any work that will make them right with God. So they must trust in God. Then He accepts their faith, and that makes them right with Him.

(He is the One who even makes evil people right with Him)
Abraham and his descendants received the promise that they would get the whole world. But Abraham did not receive that promise because he followed the Law. He received that promise because he was right with God through his faith. If people could get God's promise by following the Law, then faith is worthless. And God's promise to Abraham is worthless, because the Law can only bring God's anger on those who disobey it. But if there is no Law, then there is nothing to disobey.

People receive God's promises by having faith. This happens so that the promise can be a free gift. And if the promise is a free gift, then all of Abraham's people will get that promise.

The promise is not just for those who live under the Law of Moses. It is for all who live with faith as Abraham did. He is the father of us all.

As the Scriptures say, *“I have made you a father of many nations.”* This is true before God, the one Abraham believed — the God who gives life to the dead and speaks of things that do not yet exist into existence.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn *There is a Longing*

Refrain:

There is a longing in our hearts, O Lord, for you to reveal your self to us. There is a longing in our hearts for love we only find in your, our God.

1. For justice, for freedom, for mercy; hear our prayer. In sorrow, in grief: be near, hear our prayer, O God. ***Refrain***

2. For wisdom, for courage, for comfort; hear our prayer. In weakness, in fear: be near hear our prayer, O God. ***Refrain***

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John
Glory to you, Lord Christ. *John 3:1-17*

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God;

for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?”

Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Gradual Hymn *There is a Longing in Our Hearts*

Refrain:

There is a longing in our hearts, O Lord, for you to reveal your self to us. There is a longing in our hearts for love we only find in you, our God.

3 For healing, for wholeness, for new life: hear our prayer.
In sickness, in death: be near, hear our prayer, O God.

Refrain

4 Lord save us, take pity, light in our darkness.
We call you, we wait: be near, hear our prayer, O God.

Refrain

The Sermon

Reflection Music *Meditation on “Love Unknown”*

The Nicene Creed (*The word “catholic” means universal or global body of Christian believers*)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

Lord God, because Jesus tells us turn from selfish ways and to trust the Good News, we hold to His word and pray as he taught us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, therefore, trusting solely in God's grace and mercy, we pray:

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Show us your ways, O Lord, and teach us your paths; give us a reverence for the earth as your own creation that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory.

Give us today our daily bread.

Remember not the sins of our youth, remember us according to your love; Guide the people of this land; Lord, guide your Church; and guide all the nations in the ways of justice and peace; that we may see Christ in one another and serve the common good.

Forgive us our sins.

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

As we forgive those who sin against us.

You command us to learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, care for the sick, and to be content with what we have.

Save us from the time of trial.

Jesus was tempted by the evil one for 40 days and the angels tended to him;
strengthen us to walk the way of Christ in our own day.

Deliver us from evil.

Jesus said, "If you are tired come to me and I will give you rest," we pray for those who are sick, those who suffer; we pray for all who protect us both here and abroad, and for those on our prayer list; Especially we pray for Downs IV, Holden, Barbara, Caitlin, Victoria, Alice, Annette, Charles, Anne, Ellie, Patricia, Bob, Agie, Eric, Amy, Diana, Trude, Donna, Beverly and Carling. For those going through cancer treatments, and those in remission, especially, Downs III, Lauren, Nancy, Shannon, Frank, Carmen, Zachary, Claudia, Will, Pete, Cara, Jennifer, Lauren, Melinda, Lindsay, Melissa, Kelly, Davidson, and Kelsey. And, we pray for people that we name now; either silently or aloud. *Silence*

We pray for those who have died, and for those who mourn, may they find peace within you.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Celebrant: Lord God, you have declared that your kingdom is among us. Open our ears to hear it, our voices to proclaim it, and use our hands to serve you. This we pray in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Offertory *For the Beauty of the Earth*

The Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
praise him all creatures here below,
Praise him above ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

The Holy Eucharist Prayer D

BCP 372

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

It is truly right to glorify you, Father, and to give you thanks; for you alone are God, living and true, dwelling in light inaccessible from before time and for ever.

Fountain of life and source of all goodness, you made all

things and fill them with your blessing; you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance. Countless throngs of angels stand before you to serve you night and day; and, beholding the glory of your presence, they offer you unceasing praise.

Joining with them, and giving voice to every creature under heaven, we acclaim you, and glorify your Name, as we say,

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The people stand, sit or kneel as they are able.

We acclaim you, holy Lord, glorious in power. Your mighty works reveal your wisdom and love. You formed us in your own image, giving the whole world into our care, so that, in obedience to you, our Creator, we might rule and serve all your creatures. When our disobedience took us far from you, you did not abandon us to the power of death. In your mercy you came to our help, so that in seeking you we might find you. Again and again you called us into covenant with you, and through the prophets you taught us to hope for salvation.

Father, you loved the world so much that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior. Incarnate by

the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, he lived as one of us, yet without sin. To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation; to prisoners, freedom; to the sorrowful, joy. To fulfill your purpose, he gave himself up to death; and, rising from the grave, destroyed death, and made the whole creation new.

And, that we might live no longer for ourselves, but for him who died and rose for us, he sent the Holy Spirit, his own first gift for those who believe, to complete his work in the world, and to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all.

When the hour had come for him to be glorified by you, his heavenly Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end; at supper with them he took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption. Recalling Christ's death and his descent among the dead, proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand, awaiting his coming in glory; and offering to you, from

the gifts you have given us, this bread and this cup, we praise you and we bless you.

Celebrant and People

**We praise you, we bless you, we give thanks to you,
and we pray to you, Lord our God.**

Lord, we pray that in your goodness and mercy your Holy Spirit may descend upon us, and upon these gifts, sanctifying them and showing them to be holy gifts for your holy people, the bread of life and the cup of salvation, the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ.

Grant that all who share this bread and cup may become one body and one spirit, a living sacrifice in Christ, to the praise of your Name. Remember, Lord, your one holy universal and apostolic Church, redeemed by the blood of your Christ. Reveal its unity, guard its faith, and preserve it in peace. Remember all who have died in the peace of Christ, and those whose faith is known to you alone; bring them into the place of eternal joy and light.

And grant that we may find our inheritance with all the saints who have found favor with you in ages past. We praise you in union with them and give you glory through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God and Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **AMEN.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us,
we are bold to say,

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in
heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us
our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

Therefore let us keep the feast.

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

O Lamb of God, you away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, you away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, you away the sins of the world,
grant us thy peace.

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts by faith,
with thanksgiving.

Prayer After Communion

Let us pray. **Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Blessing

Closing Hymn *How Firm a Foundation* #636

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in his excellent word! What more can he say than to you he hath said, to you that for refuge to Jesus have fled?

“Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismayed! For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid; I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand, upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

“When through the deep waters I call thee to go, the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow; for I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless, and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

The Dismissal

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.