

- Remember again that during Lent our Fridays are days of abstinence from meat, of course...but also our Stations of the Cross beginning at 7 p.m....a wonderful way to remember Christ's sacrifice for us as we travel the way of the Cross with Him, and which also includes a plenary indulgence (under the usual conditions), not only during Lent, but every day.
- Many people lament how Veterans Day and Memorial Day seem to be almost forgotten by so many...and how inadequately we remember those who fought for our earthly freedom.
- How much more so are we bound to remember Him without Whom we would not have eternal life.
- So please come if you can. And bring the kids. Many have never even been exposed to this beautiful tradition and devotion of our Church.

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- You know...the thing that keeps people from the faith is not the difficulty of devotions, or even scandals...but rather simply not being convinced of the truth of Christianity and of God.
 - And one of the main reasons these days that people—especially young people—are that way is that SO many distractions keep them from investigating WHY our faith is not ONLY true, but why it MUST be true...
 - ...because such investigation takes time: time away from TV, movies, music, Facebook, video games, sports...all those things which give immediate, though extremely fleeting and, in the end, empty, gratification.
 - Why do kids often not want to come to CCD? Simply because it isn't immediately "fun", or they don't see the immediate applicability or importance. Yet...like anything worthwhile and of long-lasting (in this case, eternal) applicability, an investment of time is required. The greater the importance, the greater the investment required—in this case, a lifetime.

- We adults can the same way. It's funner and easier to sleep in than to stumble into the shower, round up the kids and head to Mass to listen to Father's boring hour-long homily.
- It wasn't an hour? Well...it seemed that long!
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- But in our readings today are things that affirm the truth of God and His promises...if we only take the time to consider them.
- Our first reading is about Abram (meaning "exalted father") from the beginning of monotheism: the book of Genesis.
- Abram lived about 1800-2000 BC—almost 4000 years ago...and our reading today recounts the covenant that God made with Abram...promising him that his descendants would be like the "stars of the sky"—simply a poetic way of saying very numerous.
- And at the time, Abram had no children, and it didn't seem like he was going to. His wife Sarai (meaning "princess") was barren, and apparently they couldn't have children.
- But what does the scripture say? "*Abram put his faith in the LORD, who credited it to him as an act of righteousness.*"
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- Even after this promise of God to him of many descendants, Abram & Sarai still remained childless for 15 years...but Abram never loses faith...and God eventually fulfills his promise. Sarah gets pregnant, and has her son Isaac—her only child.
- "*Well, Father, one kid is not exactly 'like the stars in the sky!'*"
- No...but from Isaac comes Jacob, and from Jacob comes all the Israelites...and eventually Jesus from Mary.
- And it is from Jesus comes literally billions of spiritual descendants to Abraham—who is called "Our father in faith".
- What did Carl Sagan use to say of the number of stars in the cosmos—"billions and billions of stars"?...and now Abraham has billions of real spiritual descendants...as St. Paul writes to the Romans: "*...not all are children of Abraham because they are his [physical] descendants; but [God promised] 'Through Isaac shall*

your descendants be named.’ This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God [Ismael, too, was Abraham’s child by the slave woman Hagar], but the children of the promise are reckoned as descendants.” (Rom 9:7-8 RSV)

- So, in the end, God’s promises—no matter how unlikely or how impossible they may seem to us—come to pass. As the Archangel Gabriel said to Mary: “*Nothing will be impossible with God.*”

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- Now...how does this play out in a affirming God’s existence and the truth of His promises?
 - Well...the book of Genesis was first compiled from oral tradition, and perhaps some written, around the time of King David—around 1000 BC—3000 years ago.
 - Israel—even under Kings David and Solomon—was a tiny nation, basically of no account if you look at the entire world stage.
 - And yet...what was written came to pass more spectacularly than anyone ever dreamed. The promise of God realized.
 - People worry about vague so-called Mayan prophecies and Nostradamus...but here is a realized prophecy, concrete and tangible, from 4000 years ago, and they scarcely take notice.
 - And think about it: even several hundred years after King David, the Israelites were almost completely wiped out by wars and conquest—the 12 tribes scattered, and only a remnant survived when brought as slaves to Babylon.
 - And yet...even with that, Abraham’s spiritual descendants—through Jesus—grew to be in the literal billions. Some statistician figure THOSE odds...that this prophecy is fulfilled even under THOSE circumstances...led by a wandering carpenter.

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- And this is simply ONE of the available examples for the surety and veracity of our faith...if ONLY we take time to look.
 - Our time to work on earth for God is so very short...and yet eternity is forever, and our time with God will be forever.

- So...what can be more worthwhile than to be close to Him...to follow Him with our whole hearts?...including Sunday Mass, reading scripture and the catechism, doing good works...because as St. Paul writes: “...*we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*” (Eph 2:10 RSV)
- The Father tells us today about Jesus: “*This is my beloved Son; listen to Him.*”
- If God the Father—whose promises and Word inevitably come to pass—tells us to listen, then we’d certainly should listen...and give Him our time.
- “*But Father...it’s been 2000 years; where IS Jesus?*”
- Remember Peter’s assurance: “...*do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day [i.e., He is timeless]. The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief [as Jesus warns many times]... ” (2 Peter 3:8-10 RSV)*

- So study our beautiful faith...practice our beautiful faith. On this faith depends your—and your children’s—hope, and eternal salvation.
- In the Transfiguration in our Gospel today, Jesus not only gives the apostles a peek at His divinity when He is transfigured, but also gives US a glimpse of the glory that is to be given to His faithful disciples as well...for, as scripture tell us, Jesus is the First-born from the dead in His resurrection; we are meant to follow after Him in glory as His brothers and sisters...in the glory of which we only glimpse in His marvelous Transfiguration.

Reading I

[Gn 15:5-12, 17-18](#)

The Lord God took Abram outside and said,
“Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you can.
Just so,” he added, “shall your descendants be.”
Abram put his faith in the LORD,
who credited it to him as an act of righteousness.

He then said to him,
“I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans
to give you this land as a possession.”
“O Lord GOD,” he asked,
“how am I to know that I shall possess it?”
He answered him,
“Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old she-goat,
a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”
Abram brought him all these, split them in two,
and placed each half opposite the other;
but the birds he did not cut up.
Birds of prey swooped down on the carcasses,
but Abram stayed with them.
As the sun was about to set, a trance fell upon Abram,
and a deep, terrifying darkness enveloped him.

When the sun had set and it was dark,
there appeared a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch,
which passed between those pieces.
It was on that occasion that the LORD made a covenant with Abram,
saying: “To your descendants I give this land,
from the Wadi of Egypt to the Great River, the Euphrates.”

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 27:1, 7-8, 8-9, 13-14.](#)

(1a) **The Lord is my light and my salvation.**

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom should I fear?

The LORD is my life’s refuge;
of whom should I be afraid?

The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Hear, O LORD, the sound of my call;
have pity on me, and answer me.
Of you my heart speaks; you my glance seeks.

The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Your presence, O LORD, I seek.

Hide not your face from me;

do not in anger repel your servant.

You are my helper: cast me not off.

The Lord is my light and my salvation.

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the LORD

in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD with courage;

be stouthearted, and wait for the LORD.

reading II

[Phil 3:17—4:1 or 3:20—4:1](#)

Join with others in being imitators of me, brothers and sisters,

and observe those who thus conduct themselves

according to the model you have in us.

For many, as I have often told you

and now tell you even in tears,

conduct themselves as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Their end is destruction.

Their God is their stomach;

their glory is in their “shame.”

Their minds are occupied with earthly things.

But our citizenship is in heaven,

and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

He will change our lowly body

to conform with his glorified body

by the power that enables him also

to bring all things into subjection to himself.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters,

whom I love and long for, my joy and crown,

in this way stand firm in the Lord.

or

Brothers and sisters:

Our citizenship is in heaven,

and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

He will change our lowly body

to conform with his glorified body

by the power that enables him also

to bring all things into subjection to himself.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters,

whom I love and long for, my joy and crown,

in this way stand firm in the Lord, beloved.

Gospel

[Lk 9:28b-36](#)

Jesus took Peter, John, and James
and went up the mountain to pray.

While he was praying his **face changed in appearance**
and his clothing became dazzling white.

And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah,
who appeared in glory and spoke of **his exodus**
that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem.

Peter and his companions had been overcome by sleep,
but becoming fully awake,

they saw his glory and the two men standing with him.

As they were about to part from him, Peter said to Jesus,
“Master, it is good that we are here;

let us make three tents,
one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

But he did not know what he was saying.

While he was still speaking,
a cloud came and cast a shadow over them,
and they became frightened when they entered the cloud.

Then from the cloud came a voice that said,

“This is my chosen Son; listen to him.”

After the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone.

They fell silent and did not at that time
tell anyone what they had seen.