

## **Homily – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent 13<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

Hope does not come easily at his time in the world; - it is one of the three cardinal virtues that springboards humanity forward with a zeal for happiness in this life and eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

In Genesis, Abraham is encountering God at Mambre, it is potentially perplexing and overwhelming. Every tribe, family or race of people is potentially threatened by their neighbour, (does that sound familiar?) However, because of Abraham's faith in God; being tested by his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac, God calls on Abraham to look up at the night sky and start counting all the stars in the universe, and so, his descendants will be as numerous as the stars in the sky. God recognises always the vulnerability of humanity – seeking to help us see beyond fear and destruction – Making a covenant to last forever.

The gospel further expands that revelation when Jesus takes Peter, James and John up Mt Horeb, where he is transfigured in a Beatific vision.... This moment again, God is encouraging, through the apostles for humanity to look up, set our vision upwards and downwards – to see beyond death.

We associate the language of downcast, downtrodden, casting our vision downwards with losing hope, a person in despair finds it hard to look up, to raise themselves on high. This Lent, 2022, we must help each other to raise up our hopes, to transcend all the things that cause us to lose heart, and see the collective Gospel narrative that is about salvation. The message of Jesus, is constantly about empowerment and conversion to crossing a threshold of hope. That Christian morality is about not accepting subjugation and decline. Decline in spirituality, decline in morality, decline in the capacity to love and be loved, the decline in reason for living that resorts to addiction and self-abuse, anger fear + violence.

Jesus knew that after climbing Mt Horeb he would lead his disciples/apostles onward to Jericho and Jerusalem. To then for him to climb calvary. He would then enter his Passion and death on the cross. He wanted to give them hope, that beyond the cross of suffering and death there is not the conclusion that this movement will disappear, but rather, his resurrection will bring renewal hope and confidence to the world; that redemption is here to stay – that he seals an eternal covenant by his cross.

We need to hear that loud and clear with the tragic war in Ukraine. Remember, there are professed Christians on both sides of the battlefield.

In the Book of Psalms, Ps 94. God pleads with the People of faith, NOT to harden their hearts to bow and bend low, to pray, to plead with God to help us to raise ourselves up again, - Yes, we are tested – but don't let yourselves get so far astray from God, that you lose hope in this life.

As St Paul says to the People of Philippi, set your eyes on the Kingdom of God and allow yourselves to be Transfigured/changed from wretchedness into beatific glory. In other words, do not give up, have 'hope' at all times and let that hopefulness help others to be recued from despair.

God bless you all, God help us. God grant us peace. AMEN!

Canon Jeremy Bath