

2nd Sun. Lent 2026

Just a reminder, everyone is welcome to participate in the Stations of the Cross devotion on Fridays, either 2:45 or 6pm. Also, next Friday the Knights will be hosting a fishy fry from 5 to 7 in the gym.

+ So we're 11 days into Lent now...and if our Lenten observances last as long as the average person's New Year's resolutions...well that means about 25% of us have already given up or failed. No I'm sure we're all doing fine, Lent is only six weeks after all. But there's nothing magical about going 40 days without dessert, especially if you don't crave it. Lent could be more fruitful for the person who fails in their Lenten observance every other day, but recommits themselves every time to the spirit of Lent, than the person who successfully goes 40 days without something but never really embraced the true reason for Lent. During these 40 days leading up to Easter we're called to live with a heightened awareness of our destiny...union with God. Abraham, among others, could be a patron saint for Lent, helping us understand and embrace the purpose of this season.

God called Abraham to go forth from the land of his father, where he grew up, and to go to an unknown land. He was being summoned to the Promised Land, just as God calls us to Heaven. And as great as that sounds, we don't find it easy...it requires us to leave behind what we're familiar with and to set out on a path known only to God. It requires us to venture out from the security we've established for ourselves, letting go of the comforts currently being enjoyed. This takes an act of faith, which is why Abraham is a great example for us. He trusted in God and faithfully responded to God's calling.

Lent is a time to embrace our own calling from God, and we do that by living the Christian life more intensely during these 40 days. A more robust prayer life, taking on certain sacrifices, accepting the cross. The practice of denying ourselves certain things frees us from

worldly attachments, comforts, our own ego...so that like Abraham, we're more inclined to go forth.

Perhaps you had high hopes for Lent, you were going to make it the most impactful Lent ever...took on some serious form of penance...only to already start slacking off. And even if it's off to a great start, you've remained true to your Lenten resolution...you will probably be tempted to slack off at some point...let your Lenten observance go unfulfilled. Because one can expect those moments of weaknesses where that cup of coffee, which you gave up, sounds too good to turn down...or maybe you determined to take cold showers for Lent, and now you're starting to think, maybe halfway between hot and cold is good enough.

If we go about our Lenten practices just by our own will power, we will either fail or the practices will fail to bear fruit. Paul offers us great counsel in his letter to Timothy. "Bear your share of hardship for the Gospel with the strength that comes from God." It's not by our own power that we take up our Lenten practices, it's by the power of the Holy Spirit. It's only by the presence and assistance of the Spirit that we can do so. And Paul reminds us, Christ saved us not by our works but by the grace he gives us. If we don't invite and cooperate with the Holy Spirit, even our 'successful' observance of Lent won't bear fruit.

When Paul mentions hardships for the Gospel, that encompasses everything. Not just the sacrifices we choose for ourselves during Lent, but also the natural sufferings that come upon us without us choosing them. Tragic death of a loved one, a debilitating illness, loss of employment, the list goes on...these things are hard and they can mystify us. We're left wondering, why Lord...where are you at in all this. What are you asking of me? It's at these moments in our life that Abraham stands up, a great figure of faith, whom God asked a lot of. Remember, Abraham

endured an incredible test of faith, he was asked to sacrifice his beloved and only son. Abraham might have thought to himself, how could God ask this of me?

We're certainly tempted to think this way, asking ourselves, what is God doing with my life by this hardship, and why? We don't always get the answer to those questions, but we can trust God in times of darkness, this is what Abraham did and it's certainly what our Lord did. How do we come to possess that level of trust, by praying for and cultivating the virtue of hope that God offers. Hope is the Christian virtue by which God provides us with the certainty that despite the darkness of today, tomorrow will be different, it will be better. Even if tomorrow is next year or eternity in Heaven.

And the Transfiguration of our Lord is a reminder of that. It's encouragement to persevere through Lent, to pick our cross back up if we have dropped it. The event of the Transfiguration comes between two predictions by our Lord of his suffering and death. And that's meant for us just as much as it was for the Apostles. Christ didn't accept the cross and die on it to exempt us from it, but to empower us in our own crosses.

Just as only God can supply us with the grace and power to go about Lent in the right way and for it to bear fruit in our spiritual life, God is the one who makes us into the saints we can be. But He never does it apart from suffering or the cross. You see, holiness is not just living a morally upright life...it's the divine presence taking shape in our life, the life of God taking possession of us. But that only occurs by the love demonstrated on Calvary and why it has a place in our life. God doesn't call us to the cross, He call us to Himself, but does so through the cross. And the more our love and desire for God grows, we will see the cross not as a burden but as an invitation the leads us to Him.