

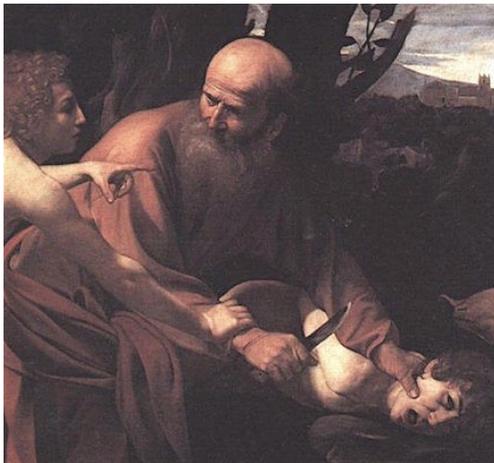
August 7, 2016 – 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

There is a wonderful example of trust in the Second Reading. It talks about the risky deeds that God asked from Abraham: travel to a land he did not know, pass through great deserts and villages full of strangers, dwell in temporary shelters all the way, and most difficult of all, believe that Sarah would at last conceive and give birth, even though, as scripture says, their old age made them “as good as dead.” And it got worse, not better. God ordered Abraham to make a bloody sacrifice of this promised son born to their aged selves. Kill him.

Let us take a closer look at the virtue of trust.

God had already promised that Abraham and Sarah would have “descendants as numerous as the sands on the seashore.” Therefore the question before Abraham was not one about obedience, as is often thought, but whether to trust in God. Could God’s promise come true even if Abraham went through with the sacrifice?

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Sunday’s First Reading says what he decided. Abraham “thought that the one who had made the promise was trustworthy.” He could take this terrible action because he believed in God’s fidelity. Maybe God would raise this son from the dead!

How would you or I have responded? Wouldn’t we say it was time to cancel this trust stuff and save whatever we can of our family? Yes, but notice: trust consists of more than just a generally sunny attitude. Trust means believing in someone. It means remembering the love residing in that person, remembering the promises, the pacts made in fidelity. It means taking the risk.

Can you or I wait in some kind of trust? Abraham did. Perhaps he was being trained by God to rely on God’s word. The Israelites were waiting, looking ahead to the coming of a Messiah in a future age. Jesus worried about God’s abandoning him as he was being crucified. Yes, he trusted, even though he was filled with the raw human fear that God had might have rejected him (“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” [Mt 27:46]).

But God had been with him even in the hardest patches of life, the ones when no one could see much evidence of him. Human bonding is always subject to doubt. If we are lucky, we discern and pray and forgive, and then give it another try. All of us remain “strangers and aliens on earth” (Second Reading), and we long for someone to trust. We long to be able to trust.

Think about it. Can we open our hearts to God and let Jesus’ own trust be ours?

[Source: Fr. John Foley SJ, http://liturgy.slu.edu/19OrdCo80716/reflections_foley.html]

NEWS

Social Gathering – Our monthly get-together needs your contribution: Please take some time after Mass to stay with those who have not (yet) left for their summer holidays, and bring a dish to share with everyone!!

Confessions – Opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation: August 14, after Mass (*Fr. John*).