

**FATHER MARK SCHULTE HOMILY**  
**Second Sunday of Lent (B)**  
**February 28, 2021**  
**“A Time of Testing”**

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Of all the descendants of Noah God chose Abraham, descendant of Noah's son Shem, to make his new covenant with. But before God makes this covenant, He wants to test Abraham's willingness to be faithful to God. The test requires Abraham, at God's command, to sacrifice His own son as an offering to God. God could see that Abraham was willing to do this, so he withdrew his command, and Abraham spared his only son from death.

As an offering of thanksgiving to God, Abraham sacrificed a ram, a male sheep. The offering was a holocaust – meaning the ram was completely burnt up. No part of it was used for food. It was given totally to God.

This whole event will prefigure the offering of God's only Son, the spotless ram, Jesus Christ. Where God spared Abraham's son Isaac, he will not withhold the life of his own Son, as an offering on our behalf.

- Abraham (is a figure of) God the Father.
- Isaac (carried the wood) is a figure of Jesus who carried the wood of the cross).

Just as God put Abraham to the test, he also tests our faith as well. Jesus was crucified, offered to God on the wood of the cross as the sacrificial Lamb, in atonement for the sins of his people. He would say to his disciples, “unless you pick up your cross and follow me you cannot be part of My kingdom.” This is the test God requires of us. We are to accept our daily crosses of suffering in imitation of Jesus' own obedience to the Father in accepting his cross.

Suffering, the cross, comes in many forms: psychological, physical, spiritual. It can also come in the form of: rejection, persecution and misunderstandings. These can be very difficult crosses to carry and they can test our faith to the limit.

Jesus knew that the faith of his disciples would be tested severely as well when they witnessed his crucifixion. Crucifixion was a scandal to the Jews because it was the most excruciating execution reserved for criminals. Jesus would die the death of a criminal.

In the Gospel, Jesus will allow Peter, James and John to see his glorified body. This vision will help strengthen them and give them hope, such that they will not lose faith and abandon Jesus upon witnessing his sacrifice in the form of crucifixion.

When our faith is tested by the crosses of our daily life – we can envision the transfiguration – and resurrection of Jesus Christ, knowing that one day our resurrected bodies will be like His.

What is the vision in your heart and mind that keeps you moving forward in faith – especially in times of suffering? The words of the Apostle Paul can be of great comfort to us as well: “If God has given his Son over [to death] for our sake, will he not give us all other things as well?”

When Peter saw Jesus transfigured in glory he said: “Lord it is good that we are here.”

God the Father has given us all good things in his son Jesus.

Lent is a time of testing. We share the cross of Christ and thus attain salvation when we accept, with joy our fasting, prayer and almsgiving.

The season of Lent has just begun. Let us ask the holy Spirit to help us be faithful to our Lenten practices and be victorious in our time of testing, as was Abraham, Jesus and the Apostles. Let us say with Peter, “Lord it is good that we are here!”

Jesus has chosen you to be present at this time to share in his gifts of grace and salvation. Therefore, shout with joy:

**“Lord it is good that we are here!”**