

Rev. Derek Fairman

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time C (Faith)

In the second reading on this 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time, we hear about Abraham, and all the ways in which Abraham demonstrated his faith. He left his home because God called him to do so, and in faith he ventured into an unknown future. By faith, he came to be a father to many nations. By faith, Abraham obeyed regarding Isaac and the sacrifice Abraham was to make. Abraham is rightly recognized as a father in the faith.

Abraham did have moments whenever he had his doubts about God's promise, though, and Abraham did some things that later generations would come to understand are wrong. Abraham's faith is still something that we recognize today, even if his faith was not perfect. He provided subsequent generations with an example of faith and obedience.

The Chosen People did not always follow what the Lord wanted them to do. Sometimes the kings and people made decisions without bothering to ask the Lord's will. Sometimes the kings and people trusted in themselves, or in making peace treaties with other nations, rather than trusting in God's promises. Sometimes the kings and people imitated the idolatry and immorality of the other peoples on the earth. The city of Jerusalem, Daughter Zion, was capable of great things, but the city could also represent the infidelity of the people.

The Lord Jesus provides us with the greatest example of faith and obedience. He was always obedient to His Father's will. He did not seek to do what He wanted, but only what His Father wanted. He did not have ulterior motives, or decide to go on His own path. The Lord Jesus fulfilled all that Abraham had foreshadowed regarding faith and obedience.

The true, Virgin Daughter Zion, the Virgin Mary, imitates her forefather Abraham and her Son. She did not follow any false God, but only the true God. When the angel came to her, to ask her to accept God's plan for her, she could not have known all the details of God's plan. The Messiah was foretold, but there were so many unknowns in the details. She trusted, like Abraham, in God's providential care for her. She was venturing into an unknown territory, leaving behind so many things, to follow the path that the Lord showed her.

What does this mean for us? Mary gives us a great example of faith and obedience to follow, no matter what vocation God has given us. Her faith is consistent, meaning that she is always faithful, rather than only appearing faithful, but deep down having other motives or desires. Mary's only desire is to do God's will. She did not have the desire to do God's will, plus

a whole bunch of other ulterior motives. She did not reluctantly follow God's will, or follow God's will if their wills coincided. She wanted to know God's will and follow it.

There are times whenever we have our own desires and plans, apart from whatever the Lord wants. The Virgin Mary's obedient faith teaches us that we cannot carry out God's will, only when it suits us, or we happen to want the same thing that God wants, or we will do God's will if we have nothing better to do. The more that we are open to God's will, the more that the Lord can reveal His love to us and to those around us.

Mary's faith is also constant, meaning that her faith in the Lord did not waver. Mary's faith was not fickle, as some of those who came before her proved to be devoted to the Lord one moment, but then that faith soon evaporated. Mary's faith was to do God's will, no matter what the Lord asked of her. It was not as if she wanted the Messiah to come, and God was ready to send the Messiah, and so everything worked out, but then Mary also had moments when she stuck to doing what she wanted. Doing God's will in its perfect state means seeking God's will and doing God's will even when it is difficult. Mary sought God's will and carried it out.

There are times whenever we feel like we can carry out God's will, whenever we feel that our faith is important to us, and we then respond to God's goodness to us. Then something else happens and we find ourselves drifting away. Maybe we respond to God whenever we need something, but then drift away whenever we receive what we were looking for, or maybe we become upset if we do not receive what we wanted. It is then that we remember Mary's obedient faith, to appreciate the Lord no matter what happens in our lives.

We do appreciate the Father's gift of the Son to us, and we cherish the love that the Father has for us. If there are times whenever we take this love for granted, then we ask the Lord to help us to appreciate His love more. Whenever the Lord Jesus comes into our hearts and our lives, He invites us to share in His love, and to share this love with others. He gives us a window into His life and love with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

As we approach the altar, we thank the Lord for His love and all that He does for us, and we ask the Lord to help us to seek His will in our lives. This is not easy, because God's will may surprise us or make difficult demands of us. When Mary sought to carry out what God wanted, she possessed a radical openness to whatever the Lord asked of her. Because of her seeking to do God's will, we can now understand the Lord's love for each one of us. We thank the ever-Virgin Mary for all that she has done for us.