

The Best Preview (Ever)

Intro. There are several television shows I like to watch. At the end of each episode, there is often a preview of the next one. If it seems exciting, I look forward to watching it. When there is no preview, it irritates me a little. Usually it means it is a repeat or worse, it won't be on at all. In today's readings we have two very different "previews" of coming events.

I. The first reading tells us about a difficult test for Abraham. He had seen the preview and wished he didn't know. He dearly hoped that God would really not ask him to do it. His trust in God was rewarded as was God's faith in Abraham. God knew Abraham would hold nothing back in this new relationship. From this point on, Abraham became one of the

most important leaders of the Israelites. But it leaves an uneasy moment: would God have followed through? God tests us or *allows us to be tested* to see the depth of our faith. In the gospel, we fast forward eight chapters in the Lord's journey to Jerusalem. Prior to this, the Lord asked who the disciples thought he was and Peter declared that Jesus was the Messiah. Then the Lord began to explain what that meant for him and them - a difficult way of life and, ultimately death, but also resurrection. After these terrible predictions, the Lord encouraged his three closest friends by revealing to them a preview of his glory. The Lord knew the future for the disciples was going to be hard; he didn't want them to be discouraged. Seeing the awesome glory of the Son of God and the two greatest leaders of their tradition gave James, John and Peter an experience they could

hold on to and share with each other. At the end of a terrible day they could think of it or say to one another, “Remember that day on the mountain; how good it was for us to be there?” and get up the next day and continue the work of the gospel. It was strength the three could use.

Concl. It might be nice if we could get a preview of the coming events in our lives. A few people do seem to have a sense of future things. I think if we knew *some* things however, we would try to un-see and forget them. I firmly believe the Lord gives us occasional glimpses of joy and hope, like a love or friendship that stirs our heart or the birth of a baby or an event that causes us to realize how blessed we are and a wonderful gift from God. The three disciples had to come down from their all too brief mountain moment. So do we from ours. And like them, we

bring that experience with us back to our present life and are a little more energized than before.

Encouraged by these visions, we might be better able to rise to the challenge of our journey with the Lord and encourage each other on theirs. **We might not think of Lent as a trip to the mountain, but it is the opening movement of a story, the first step that will lead us to another place of transfiguration: a renewed life in Christ and the Resurrection.**

Fr. Michael Pendergraft

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