

Second Sunday in Lent, 25 February 2024

First Reading: Genesis 17:1-7,15,16 God's promise to Abraham and Sarah

17 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. ²Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.' ³Abram fell face down, and God said to him, ⁴'As for me, this is my covenant with you: you will be the father of many nations. ⁵No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. ⁷I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ¹⁵God also said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.'

PSALM 22:23-31

²³You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honour him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! ²⁴For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help. ²⁵From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly; before those who fear you I will fulfil my vows. ²⁶The poor will eat and be satisfied; those who seek the LORD will praise him – may your hearts live for ever! ²⁷All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, ²⁸for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations. ²⁹All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel before him – those who cannot keep themselves alive. ³⁰Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. ³¹They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it!

Second Reading: Romans 4:13-25 Abraham received God's promise through faith

¹³It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that

comes by faith. ¹⁴ For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, ¹⁵ because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. ¹⁶ Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring – not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. ¹⁷ As it is written: 'I have made you a father of many nations.' He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed – the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not. ¹⁸ Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.' ¹⁹ Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead – since he was about a hundred years old – and that Sarah's womb was also dead. ²⁰ Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹ being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. ²² This is why 'it was credited to him as righteousness.' ²³ The words 'it was credited to him' were written not for him alone, ²⁴ but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness – for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵ He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

GOSPEL: Mark 8:31-38 The cost of discipleship

³¹ He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. 'Get behind me, Satan!' he said. 'You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.' ³⁴ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life^[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? ³⁷ Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ³⁸ If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.'