

**Homily – Second Sunday of Lent
Scouting Mass at Our Lady of Perpetual Help – February 24, 2024**

Today the word of God invites us to take a journey to three mountaintops. Some people love to hike and climb mountains! I wonder if there are any of those here. Others are afraid of heights! Be calm! We will go together under the guidance and security of the Holy Spirit and the word of God. The view from the mountaintops will change our lives if we allow it to do so.

First, the mountain of the transfiguration. Peter and James – who have followed Jesus without question – will abandon him when he is arrested and crucified. Today, Jesus leads them, together with John – and us – to a mountain where he is changed before their eyes. They have a vision of the Son of God in the company of Moses and Elijah. Peter is terrified by the unexpected, powerful vision, and blurs out: *Let us stay here forever -- in the presence of the very Son of God!* Jesus tells them to remember what they saw on the mountain when they find themselves alone after the Lord's death. Remember what you saw! Look at everything in the light of faith!

The second mountain is Moriah where God puts Abraham to the supreme test. God had made a threefold promise to elderly Abraham and Sarah – who had no children – that he would give them a new land, make a great nation from them, and bless all the people of the world through them. When they are over one hundred years old and finally have one child, God asks Abraham to offer him up in sacrifice. Isaac is not only his only, beloved son, but also the only fulfillment so far of God's threefold promise. Ultimately, it is about Abraham's great trust in God. He is willing to trust in God's promise even at the loss of his son's life.

The third mountain is Calvary where we stand at the foot of the Cross. Here God is willing to sacrifice his own beloved Son for our redemption. The Cross demonstrates God's enduring love for us.

We live in difficult times. It is hard to find the truth about anything today! It is hard to trust anyone. There are so many lies, prompted by the Prince of Lies, Satan. We walk on the way of the Cross every day with those who suffer. But we are also to remember what we have seen: not only the crucifixion but also the resurrection. Like Abraham, we are to trust in God's promises and love for us, especially when we encounter chaos, hatred, racism, polarization.

Pope Francis reminds us: (quote) *"To deepen our knowledge of the Master, to fully understand and embrace the mystery of his salvation, accomplished in total self-giving inspired by love, we must allow ourselves to be taken aside by him and to detach ourselves from mediocrity and vanity. We need to set out on the journey, an uphill path that, like a mountain trek, requires effort, sacrifice and concentration."* (end of quote). Only God can bear good fruit in our lives – including faith and trust in Him – if we allow him. He provides us with everything we need, but we need to walk with Him. Sunday Mass is where He gathers us to send us out every week on our journey. Do you go to Mass every Sunday?

Holy Spirit, be with us to guide us to walk in God's ways, not those of the world! Help us to trust in God's promises! God is faithful!

Our Lady of Guadalupe, make us docile to the Holy Spirit.