

The Solemnity of Pentecost Sunday
May 23, 2021
Year of the Eucharist and Parish (Reflection #19)

“Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.’ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him.” (Genesis 12:1-2, 4)

The story of Abram, later renamed Abraham by God, offers us a beautiful witness of how mankind was invited to respond to God’s covenant of love. The first thing we can notice occurs during the calling of Abram. In the text cited above, we can read how God requires Abram to make an act of faith. Abram must obediently perform the task that God demands of him. He must leave everything he has known for the past seventy-five years of his life. This is the first lesson we can reflect upon today. Abram’s humble act of obedience is in sharp contrast with some of the various Old Testament figures (Adam, Eve, Cain, Ham) we have already examined. Let us use this time to consider what God is asking of Abram and how this same request still applies to us today.

The Divine Plan of God for the salvation of His children began as soon as Adam and Eve left the Garden. For this plan to succeed, God would need mankind to fully commit to becoming obedient. This may seem odd for you to read or hear, but God needed man to be obedient. A simple explanation for this—God wants His children to freely choose to follow Him. He does not want slaves. A slave does what his master requires due to the threat of being punished. A child obeys their parents due to their love for their parents. This love develops from their parents first loving them. This is further illustrated later in the Bible when Jesus taught His disciples, and us, how to pray using the words: “Our Father.”

The second lesson we can reflect upon involves the special relationship Abram has with God. It is a relationship based upon prayer. Not exclusively prayer through words, Abram’s prayer is witnessed through his actions. As the old saying reminds us—“The secrets of a person’s heart are expressed through their actions.” When Abram begins his journey, he stops at various points to construct altars to God. These altars would serve to remind both Abram and God of God’s promise to bless Abram with land and numerous descendants.

This part of the story of Abram should seem very familiar to all of us. Like Abram, we too have been called by God to set out on a journey toward a promised land. The journey can be understood as our earthly lives. The promised land is heaven. To complete our own journeys, we need to obey the commands of Our Father in much the same way as Abram did. This is where life’s journey can become very rough. We will be tempted to follow the path we believe best for us. Too often this path will lead nowhere and only serve to thwart our progress toward our promised land. These paths, although unique for us, will be well worn from the sinful footsteps of our ancestors (Cain and Ham). If you or I think we too have left God’s way and are now on our own way, all we need do is examine our actions. Our actions will tell us best which path we are currently on; God’s or our’s. May God bless each of us as we strive to journey together as one united family, His Family, toward our promised land of Heaven.