

2nd Sunday Lent Cycle B 3-8-09

Two mountains, 600 yards, two beloved sons, 1700 years, our lives. The first mountain is Mt. Moriah--and this is not Mt. Moriah Cemetery off Rt. 125. Moriah is where Abraham seemed to hear God say, "Give up your beloved son Isaac, the son of your old age."

What kind of God would ask an old man to kill his only child? One scholar reminds us that in Old Testament times, people believed that whenever anything at all happened--good or bad--God was directly causing it. The scholar writes: maybe Isaac got badly injured, maybe Abraham interpreted the injury as God's will, maybe when it got written down hundreds of years later, the writer created the dramatic story to make it more memorable.

In any case, Abraham seemed to hear God saying "Give up your son." And Abraham said, *"God, I will let go of anything you ask, as long as I don't have to let go of You. God, I will give up anything but you!"*

This is the deepest faith, isn't it? When we want to cry out to God, "this is not what I signed up for!", when we walk down a path we would not have chosen, when our dreams and hopes lay shattered on the floor.....when we still trust and refuse to despair.

I was so discouraged, so disheartened to learn.... "God, this is not the Archdiocese I signed up to serve!" But Abraham humbly obeyed God's will, not his own--and God's will for me is to continue to serve you.

Abraham trusted God completely, and is not considered the

father of three great religions: the Jewish faith, Christianity, and Islam. When you see a picture Jerusalem, that huge dome is a mosque called the Dome of the Rock. Muslims believe that inside the mosque is the very rock on which Abraham laid his beloved Son Isaac.

Only 500 yards away, but 1700 years later, another beloved Son carried wood for a sacrifice. He would be followed by his mother, to a little mountain we call "Calvary." The night before, he had prayed, "Father, let this cup pass from my, yet not my will, but Thine be done." Jesus, obedient, beloved Son of God, was not spared. No ram took his place; instead, nailed to a wooden Cross, he is the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." At every Mass, we re-enact his obedient death and try to die with him. At every Mass, we join our crosses to Jesus, and offer ourselves to the Father.