



Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney's Lent Course 2024

THE WAY TO THE CROSS

MONDAY 26 FEBRUARY



GOD KEEPS PROMISES

Themes in the readings for the Second Sunday of Lent include God keeping promises.

In Genesis 17.1-7, 15-16 we hear of God's covenant with Abram, which is marked by a name change for Abram to Abraham and his wife Sarai to Sarah. This includes the promise that Abraham will be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. This promise is referenced in Mary's Magnificat.

Psalm 22 is a Psalm of Lament that turns into praise. In the lectionary we hear the second part of the Psalm (22.23-30)- where the Psalmist is reflecting on God's promise and presence. The Psalmist has petitioned God, leaves their request on God's hand, trusting in the promises of God's faithfulness and mercy.

In the lectionary we hear the second part of Psalm 22, the beginning of Psalm 22 are words Jesus utters on the cross - My God My God why have you forsaken me? This is something to reflect on as we journey on the Way to the Cross.

In the Epistle, Paul's letter to the churches in Rome, we hear the Apostle's reflections on the story of Abraham we heard in Genesis 17. However, we might question Paul's approach as it seems to take a different perspective to Genesis, where Abraham definitely doubts God. Maybe for Paul, Abraham's faith is strong because he trusts in God's promises so much so that Abraham is prepared to take risks, step out in faith and respond to God's call on his life, again and again.

Collect for Second Sunday of Lent

God of patience and humility, in your love you gave your Son to be rejected and raised up on a cross.

Gather us under its shadow and open our eyes to its mystery, that we may share even now in the life that is from above; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

The passage from Mark 8.31-38 immediately follows Peter saying he knows who Jesus is (Mark 8.29). This response to those around him from Jesus foretells what will happen to him and the implications this has for those who want to follow him.

You can see the mirror in this Sunday's reading and the one for the First Sunday of Lent. There is a declaration that Jesus is God's beloved son, then Jesus goes into the wilderness in Mark 1. In Mark 8 Peter declares who Jesus is and then Jesus foretells of the suffering that will happen. The divine in Mark 1 and the human conversations in Mark 8.

Jesus' sharp rebuke to Peter is because Peter is trying to persuade him to go against divine will to journey to the cross. Satan in the wilderness in Mark 1 tried to persuade Jesus to go against divine will. Jesus' rebuke to Peter can seem shocking but also stresses the importance of what Jesus is saying, the implications for himself and those who choose to follow him.

In Mark 8.31 we hear the first of the three predictions of Jesus of his Passion. The others are found in Mark 9.31 and Mark 10.33-34.

From Mark 10.34, Jesus address both his disciples and the crowd - a far wider audience. We hear the paradox of following Jesus, of discipleship of choosing to get behind Jesus. That in order to gain something more important than earthly life we need to be prepared to give up things. Jesus speaks the words that feature at the beginning of the Lenten blessing "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." This stresses that in choosing to follow Jesus there are choices to be made in life.

What might denying oneself mean? This could mean making yourself not the centre of your own concerns, preferring serving others to your own status and power. The promise is that those who choose to deny themselves in this way will receive an eternal reward (Mark 8.35-37). This is further stressed in Mark 8.36 it is stressed that worldly goods are not as important as one's life.

"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me"

Mark 8.34

Usual Weekly Pattern

Sunday
RCL Eucharist
Readings and Collect

Monday
Delving Deeper into
the Readings

Tuesday
Words from Others
(sacred & secular)

Wednesday
Resources from the
Arts

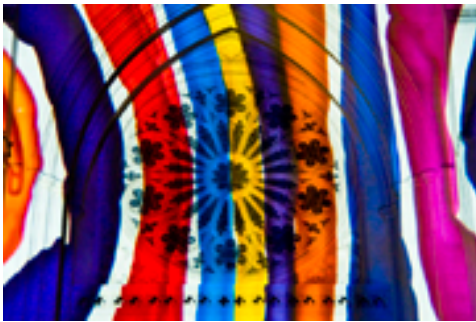
Thursday
Contemplative Acts

Friday
Personal Reflection
- what this means to
me

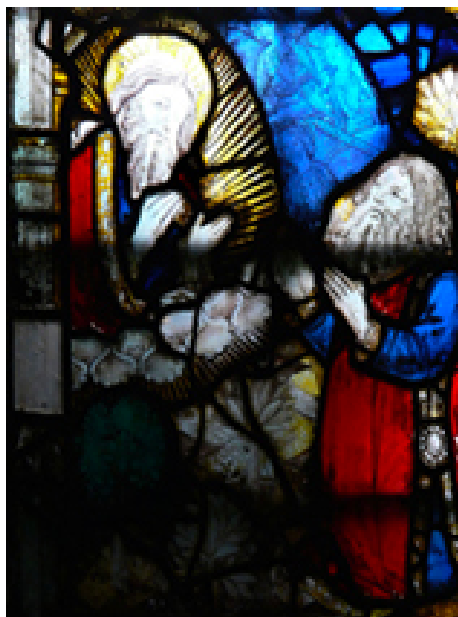
Saturday
Acts & Deeds

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT

- We hear of the promises of God in our readings, promises to Abraham, promises the Psalmist references, the ones Paul reflects on in the letter to the Romans. What are the promises of God that come to your mind, what do they mean to you as you walk towards the Cross this Lent? How might you explain them to someone who doesn't come to church?
- In the Gospel of Mark the section we read on the Second Sunday of Lent follows Peter's assertion that he knows who Jesus is. How would you describe who Jesus is to you? Has this changed through your journey of faith?
- Jesus makes it clear to the crowd and his disciples that following him will involve loss and gain. What examples in the disciples lives and those of the early Church can you think of that illustrate this? What are the losses and gains for you in following Christ?



- The words of Jesus in Mark 8.34 are used at the beginning of the Lenten blessing: "Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him, and the blessing..." From the readings for the Second Sunday in Lent what examples do you see of people growing in holiness, denying themselves, taking up their cross and following God?



All the ends
of the earth
shall turn to
you, O Lord.

*Refrain for
Psalm 22.22-30*

Eternal God,
the light of the
minds that know
you,
the joy of the
hearts that love
you,
and the strength
of the wills that
serve you:
grant us so to
know you
that we may
truly love you,
so to love you
that we may
truly serve you,
whose service is
perfect freedom;
through Jesus
Christ our Lord.
Amen

*after Augustine
of Hippo (430)*