

**FOR THE WEEKEND OF FEBRUARY 27 - 28, 2021**

Abraham & Isaac/Transfiguration of Jesus

**Gospel reading**

Mark 9:2-10

After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them.

Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus.

Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified.

Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; then from the cloud came a voice, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.”

Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them.

As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant.

**Homily helper / connection to stewardship / giving / charity / almsgiving**

* LOVE
* Trust
* Sacrifice
  + Do you really trust God?
  + What would you sacrifice for God?
  + What do your calendar and bank statement say about your love for or trust in God?

**Appeal Script/Talking Points**

*(Use these talking points during In-Pew Solicitation weekend on February 27-28 to thank your parishioners and ask them to support the Appeal online.)*

* In-Pew Weekend is here! I hope you have taken time to consider how you and your family can support this year’s Annual Diocesan Appeal, which helps to engage the next generation, provide for those in need and build Catholic communities in many important ways.
* Our goal as a parish this year is <$AMT> and I hope you will join me in helping to meet and exceed this year’s goal!
* There is so much need and we’re blessed at <PARISH NAME> to receive assistance from the Appeal. [List the blessings and parish ministries supported by the Appeal. For example: We have a beautiful church, we have a great school, or we have a wonderful religious education program.]
* I know it’s not always easy to support the church, whether that is our parish, or the diocese and I know it’s not always easy for me to stand up here and ask you week after week.
* But, please know the importance of what the Appeal is doing and the impact it’s making in the lives of others.
* Considering everything going on with the pandemic, our whole lives have shifted to online – we’ve livestreamed masses, provided virtual Bible studies, and relied on social media as our primary method of communication with our parishioners. Today, we will rely on technology once again – this time for our support of the Appeal.
* You know… growing up, my mother/father/parents always told me to pay attention, sit still and be quiet during Mass. There was an expectation to remove all distractions. And now, I’m going to tell you to do the exact opposite of that – get out your phones! 😊
* We now have a secure and convenient way to make your 2021 Appeal commitment online.
* *At this time, the digital usher puts up the website on the livestream so people can see the address. For those in the pews, you should strongly consider putting the website address on pieces of paper (in a large font) and taping them on the backs of the seats or pews. You don’t have to do every seat and you can spread them out – you will just want to make sure people can see them easily from where they are sitting.*
* I encourage you to open up the internet browser on your phone now and type in <https://richmondcatholicfoundation.org/appeal/> where you’ll be able to make an ongoing recurring gift, a 12-month pledge or a one-time gift. That website again is <https://richmondcatholicfoundation.org/appeal/>.
* Note that we will post a brief video in the comments section of our livestream that walks you through the website and shows you how to make your gift online.

* *At this time, the digital usher puts up the online giving tutorial on the livestream so people can access it if they need help filling out the form.*
* Even though we are not physically handing out in-pew pledge envelopes as normal, the idea is still the same. The in-pew process is a chance for all of us who have not yet given to make our gifts to the Appeal.
* The collective spirit we bring to this effort today will be a major step to our success with this year’s Appeal. Keep in mind: the more we collect, the more we receive back through the parish sharing formula of the Appeal.
* At this time, we would like to pause for about five minutes so anyone who has not yet given can go online and make their pledge or gift.
* If you have already given, thank you very much. During these five minutes, perhaps you could offer prayers for the success of this year’s Appeal.
* ***PAUSE FOR FIVE MINUTES.***
* *After five minutes:* Thank you for taking the time to fill out the online form and for supporting this year’s Appeal. We look forward to updating you on our Appeal progress soon. God bless.

**Intercession**

That we have Abraham’s trust in and love for God, offer our thanks to God, and share that love with others through the Annual Diocesan Appeal.

**Copy for bulletin announcement**

Today’s readings are ALL about sacrifice and love. Love and sacrifice. In the first reading, Abraham wanted a son so badly and God gave him one through a wife that was supposed to be unable to get pregnant. God tested Abraham’s love for him. Did he love his new son more or did he love God more? Abraham loved God and trusted in him, and Isaac was saved. Abraham sacrifices a ram in thanksgiving to God.

In the Gospel, God transfigures Jesus into dazzling white and says to all, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.” God loves ***US*** so much he sacrifices his own son (the Lamb) for our sins.

How much do we listen to Jesus, as God asked us to? What sacrifices do we make, especially during Lent, in thanksgiving to God for all He gives to us? How much do we trust in God? Enough to give him control of our finances? Make the Annual Diocesan Appeal part of your Lenten almsgiving.

**Copy for pulpit announcement**

Reflect this weekend on showing *your* love for and trust in God, by prayerfully considering a gift to the Annual Diocesan Appeal. See the bulletin for more details on Annual Diocesan Appeal.

**FIRST READING**

Genesis 22: 1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18

Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test and said to him: Abraham! “Here I am!” he replied. Then God said: Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There offer him up as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you.

When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. Next he bound his son Isaac, and put him on top of the wood on the altar.

Then Abraham reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, “Abraham, Abraham!” “Here I am,” he answered. “Do not lay your hand on the boy,” said the angel. “Do not do the least thing to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you did not withhold from me your son, your only one.”

Abraham looked up and saw a single ram caught by its horns in the thicket. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son.

A second time the angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven and said: “I swear by my very self—oracle of the LORD—that because you acted as you did in not withholding from me your son, your only one, I will bless you and make your descendants as countless as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants will take possession of the gates of their enemies, and in your descendants all the nations of the earth will find blessing, because you obeyed my command.”

**Social media post/content**

Photo: Cross and crown of thorns

Copy: “In this Lenten season, we are so grateful for all of those who support Catholic ministries and programs through the Annual Diocesan Appeal.”