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## GOD PUTS ABRAHAM TO THE TEST (GENESIS 22)

This has to be one of the most confusing and confounding stories in the Bible - God puts Abraham to the test! The Jewish people refer to this as the Aqedah - "the Binding" or "the Sacrificing" of Isaac. It has to be also one of the saddest stories in the Bible - as we see a parent binding and preparing to sacrifice an only child. Thomas Cahill in his book *The Gift of the Jews*, adds a poignant insight to this story when he observes that the word "love" is mentioned for the first time in the Bible. God said, Take your son, your only child Isaac, whom you love.... Abraham was asked to sacrifice the child he loved. Yet, this story is about the greatest faith any human person can have in God.

Against all odds and beyond all expectations, Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah. Isaac was their hope. He was the one who held the promise that God made to them that they would be blessed with prosperity and posterity. We can only imagine how totally incomprehensible this command of God must have been to them. We can almost feel in our own hearts the agonising pain that Abraham must have felt as he walked along with Isaac for three days till they reached Mount Moriah - knowing all along that on that mountain the Aqedah will take place. On that mountain, Isaac was bound, placed on the altar of wood, and was about to be killed when at the very last moment God put a stop to it.

Questions are sure to arise: Is God such a terrifying Being who takes pleasure in putting us to the test? Does God take delight in making us go through pain and agony just to see if we are faithful? The answer is, "No". If we are to learn anything about God from this story, it is this: God is the Creator and the Giver of all life. All that we are and everything we have in life are gifts from God. Knowing this truth is easy on the rational and theological level. However, living out this truth in the real and radical way requires faith. Only with faith will we be willing to bind and sacrifice all we have to God - even the one and the thing we love most.

Abraham's faith was that he could see Isaac as God's gift to him and Sarah. In willing to bind and sacrifice his only son, Abraham was returning to God what belonged to God. Yes, God did put Abraham and Sarah to the ultimate test. And, they passed with distinction. In not refusing to give Isaac back to God, Abraham and Sarah have become our ancestors and models in faith. They have been blessed with sons and daughters "as many as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore."

**Reflection by Clement Lee, CSSr**

# Novena notes



2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent  
 Year B  
 25 February 2018

## Readings & Responses for the Week

Sun, 25 February	Gen 22:1-2,9-13,15-18; Rom 8:31-34; Mk 9:2-10 I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.
Mon, 26 February	Dan 9:4-10; Lk 6:36-38 Do not treat us according to our sins, O Lord.
Tue, 27 February	Is 1:10,16-20; Mt 23:1-12 I will show God's salvation to the upright.
Wed, 28 February	Jer 18:18-20; Mt 20:17-28 Save me in your love, O Lord.
Thu, 1 March	Jer 17:5-10; Lk 16:19-31 Happy the man who has placed his trust in the Lord.
Fri, 2 March	Gen 37:3-4,12-13,17-28; Mt 21:33-43,45-46 Remember the wonders the Lord has done.
Sat, 3 March	Mic 7:14-15,18-20; Lk 15:1-3,11-32 The Lord is compassion and love.

WEEKDAY MASS (MON - FRI)  
 Time: 6.30am, 12.15pm, 6.30pm  
 Confession: Half an hour before Mass

SUNSET MASS (SAT)  
 Time: 6.30pm

SUNDAY MASS  
 Time: 8am, 10am, 12noon, 5.30pm

PUBLIC HOLIDAY  
 Time: 8am, 6.30pm

SATURDAY MORNING MASS  
 Time: 7am

SATURDAY NOVENA DEVOTION  
 English: 8am, 9.30am, 11am, 1pm, 4pm, 5.30pm  
 Mandarin: 2.30pm  
 Confession: After every Novena Service except after the 11am service.

DAYS OF OBLIGATION  
 Time: 7pm (Eve of Day of Obligation)  
 6.30am, 12.15pm, 7pm

# Novena notes

## Lenten Novena

Our Lenten Novena to prepare for Easter began on Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2018. The Theme for this special Novena is: "Jesus gives eternal life!" All are welcome and bring along your family and friends.

27 Jan : The 7 Signs of Jesus in St. John's Gospel

3 Feb : Changing Water into Wine

10 Feb : Healing of the Royal Official's Son

17 Feb : Healing of a Crippled Man at Bethesda Pool

### **24 Feb : Feeding of the 5,000**

3 Mar : Walking on the Water

10 Mar : Healing of the Man Born Blind

17 Mar : Raising of Lazarus from the Dead

24 Mar : Dying on the Cross

## Chinese Lenten Rally 2018

ACAMS will be organizing a Lenten Rally in Novena Church. The Theme for this Lenten Rally is : Repent, Rebuild & Return (悔改, 重建, 归回)

The rally consists of 5 nights & will start at 7.45pm with Station of the Cross followed by Mass at 8.15pm.

21 Feb - Fr. Henry Siew

**28 Feb - Fr. John Chen Binshan**

7 Mar - Fr. John Chua

14 Mar - Fr. Peter Zhang

21 Mar - Fr. Terence Wee



## Donations for our new pews

The pews give us the place to sit in silence, pray and worship. Your gift would be etched on a plaque affixed to the side of the pews.

Brochures can be obtained from the Reception Office.

## RCIA : Celebration Of The Scrutinies

On the 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of March, 2018, we'll celebrate the Scrutinies in preparation for the Baptism of our Elect at Easter. These Scrutinies will take place at the 8.00am Mass. Please keep all our Elect in prayer as they prepare for their Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist.

## Maintenance of the new church

Now that our building fund target has been met, all further donations will go towards our Church Maintenance Fund.

You can donate by cheque. You can now also donate via GIRO.

Kindly issue your cheque payable to:

### **Redemptorist Fathers Maintenance Fund.**

Those who wish to donate via GIRO, please obtain the GIRO Form from the Reception desk.

Our credit card machine can now accept donations to the Maintenance Fund via Pay Wave.

Thank you very much for your generous support.

## Stations Of The Cross

Stations of the Cross will be held every Friday during Lent at 6.00pm followed by 6.30pm Mass.

