Second Sunday of Lent (a)

OPENING PRAYER:
Almighty God, give us reverence for all creation and respect for every person, that we may mirror your likeness in Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

FIRST READING
A reading from the book of Genesis 12:1-4a
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. 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. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'.
So Abram went, as the LORD had told him;
and Lot went with him.
This is the Word of the Lord. ***Thanks be to God.***

RESPONSORIAL PSALM from Psalm 33
R. May your love by upon us, O Lord,
as we place all our hope in you.

1. For the word of the Lord | is faithful
and all his works | to be | trusted.
The Lord loves jus | tice and | right
and fills the | earth with his | love. ***(R.)***

2. The Lord looks on those | who re | vere him,
on those who hope | in his | love,
to rescue their | souls from | death,
to keep them a | live in | famine. ***(R.)***

3. Our soul is waiting | for the | Lord.
The Lord is our help | and our | shield.
May your love be upon |us, O | Lord,
as we place all our | hope in | you. ***(R.)***

SECOND READING
A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans 4:1-5,13-17
What are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.
For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations') – Abraham believed in the presence of the God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.
This is the Word of the Lord. ***Thanks be to God.***

GOSPEL John 3:1-17
Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
Glory to you, O Lord.
There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.'
Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.'
Nicodemus said to him***:*** 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?'
Jesus answered,"Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.'
Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered**,** 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.
For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Second Sunday of Lent — A Theological Reflection

Lent is a journey of trust. On this Sunday we see where that journey begins. God calls Abram to leave land, family and security. The command is simple: "Go." There is no map, only promise. Faith begins not in certainty but in obedience.
Paul explains what this means. Abraham was not justified by achievement. He believed God, and that trust was reckoned as righteousness. Salvation does not arise from human performance. It rests on God's promise. Grace comes before merit.
In the Gospel, Nicodemus comes by night. He recognises that God is at work in Jesus, yet he does not understand. Jesus speaks of new birth — not improvement of the old life, but birth from above. Flesh gives birth to flesh; the Spirit gives birth to spirit. Faith is not inherited. It is given.
The heart of the Gospel is declared without ambiguity: God so loved the world that he gave his only Son. The cross is not accident but gift. Eternal life is not reward for the strong but promise for those who believe.

Abram left his country. Nicodemus must leave his assumptions. Lent calls us to the same movement. We are summoned to trust the God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence what does not yet exist. Faith walks forward before it sees.

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS:
Grant, O Lord, that as we lift up these earthly gifts in the name of your Son Jesus Christ, so we may share in the heavenly banquet of his eternal life, who is alive and reigns, now and forever. ***Amen.***

COMMUNION SENTENCE:
Whoever believes in the Son of Man shall have eternal life.
John 3:15

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:
Almighty God, you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul: through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***