

NINETEENTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
10 August 2025

Fr. Jim Fredericks

Part One: the readings for the day
Part Two: reflections on the readings
Part Three: guidelines for *lectio divina*

PART ONE: READINGS FOR THE DAY
Lectionary: 117

Reading 1 Wisdom 18:6-9

The night of the passover was known
beforehand to our fathers,
that, with sure knowledge of the oaths
in which they put their faith,
they might have courage.
Your people awaited the salvation of the just
and the destruction of their foes.
For when you punished our adversaries, in this you
glorified us whom you had summoned.
For in secret the holy children of the good
were offering sacrifice
and putting into effect
with one accord the divine institution.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 33:1, 12, 18-19, 20-22

R. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.
Exult, you just, in the LORD;
praise from the upright is fitting.
Blessed the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people he has chosen for his own inheritance.
R. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.
See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him,
upon those who hope for his kindness,
To deliver them from death
and preserve them in spite of famine.
R. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.
Our soul waits for the LORD,
who is our help and our shield.
May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us
who have put our hope in you.
R. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

Reading 2 Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19

Brothers and sisters:

Faith is the realization of what is hoped for
and evidence of things not seen.

Because of it the ancients were well attested.

By faith Abraham obeyed
when he was called to go out to a place
that he was to receive as an inheritance;
he went out, not knowing where he was to go.
By faith he sojourned in the promised land
as in a foreign country,
dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob,
heirs of the same promise;
for he was looking forward to the city with foundations,
whose architect and maker is God.
By faith he received power to generate,
even though he was past the normal age
—and Sarah herself was sterile—
for he thought that the one
who had made the promise was trustworthy.
So it was that there came forth from one man,
himself as good as dead,
descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky
and as countless as the sands on the seashore.

All these died in faith.
They did not receive what had been promised
but saw it and greeted it from afar
and acknowledged themselves to be strangers
and aliens on earth,
for those who speak thus show
that they are seeking a homeland.
If they had been thinking of the land
from which they had come,
they would have had opportunity to return.
But now they desire a better homeland, a heavenly one.
Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God,
for he has prepared a city for them.

By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac,
and he who had received the promises

was ready to offer his only son,
of whom it was said,
"Through Isaac descendants shall bear your name."
He reasoned that God was able
to raise even from the dead,
and he received Isaac back as a symbol.

Alleluia Matthew 24:42a, 44

R. Alleluia, alleluia.
Stay awake and be ready!
For you do not know on what day your Lord will come.
R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel Luke 12:32-48

Jesus said to his disciples:
"Do not be afraid any longer, little flock,
for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.
Sell your belongings and give alms.
Provide money bags for yourselves that do not wear out,
an inexhaustible treasure in heaven
that no thief can reach nor moth destroy.
For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.

"Gird your loins and light your lamps
and be like servants who await
their master's return from a wedding,
ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks.
Blessed are those servants
whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival.
Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself,
have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them.
And should he come in the second or third watch
and find them prepared in this way,
blessed are those servants.
Be sure of this:
if the master of the house had known the hour
when the thief was coming,
he would not have let his house be broken into.
You also must be prepared,
for at an hour you do not expect,
the Son of Man will come."

Then Peter said,
"Lord, is this parable meant for us or for everyone?"

And the Lord replied,
"Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward
whom the master will put in charge of his servants
to distribute the food allowance at the proper time?
Blessed is that servant whom his master
on arrival finds doing so.
Truly, I say to you, the master will put the servant
in charge of all his property.
But if that servant says to himself,
'My master is delayed in coming,'
and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants,
to eat and drink and get drunk,
then that servant's master will come
on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour
and will punish the servant severely
and assign him a place with the unfaithful.
That servant who knew his master's will
but did not make preparations
nor act in accord with his will
shall be beaten severely;
and the servant who was ignorant of his master's will
but acted in a way deserving of a severe beating
shall be beaten only lightly.
Much will be required of the person entrusted with much,
and still more will be demanded
of the person entrusted with more."

PART TWO: HOMILY ON THE READINGS

Today, I want to reflect with you about the virtue of faith. I
also want to tell you about our young people - after all,
school starts tomorrow.

Lots of people think that faith is believing what can't be
proved scientifically. This is quite silly, in my view. Faith is
about trusting in God. This is difficult. But faith is about
more than this. Faith is about being obedient to God's
command. This is hard too.

The second reading, taken from the Letter to the Hebrews,
talks about the Patriarch Abraham. Let me tell you about
Abraham.

In the Book of Genesis, after the great myths about creation, Cain and Able, Noah and his Ark and the Tower of Bable, we are told about Abraham.

The LORD said to Abraham: Go forth from your land, your relatives, and from your father's house to a land that I will show you.

We don't know who this God is who speaks to Abraham. And we don't even know where this Promised Land is. All we are told is that

Abraham went as the LORD directed him.

Abraham obeys. He is obedient to the command of God, trusting in God's promise. He sets out into the desert, trusting in God's promise.

Abraham is called "the Father of Faith" because he trusts and he obeys. He trusts that God will not abandon him in the desert and he obedient to God's command to leave home and set out on the journey.

Faith is hard. Speaking of Father Abraham, the great thinker Soren Kierkegaard said,

Faith is the hardest thing.

Sometimes I think about my Irish ancestors when I reflect on Abraham and how hard faith is. Some of my Irish ancestors left home because of the *Gota Mor* - the Great Hunger. A quarter of the population of Ireland starved to death during the potato blight in the 1840s and another twenty-five percent left home as emigrants. There was plenty of grain in Ireland during the Great Hunger - but the British gave the grain to their sheep. There was money to be made in selling wool to the great textile mills in Manchester and Liverpool.

Abraham set out across a desert. My ancestors set out across an ocean. Like Abraham, they left home, trusting that God would not abandon them. In fact, they came here to these shores trusting that God was accompanying them on the journey.

I think about our Spanish speaking families when I think about Father Abraham. Free trade agreements have made it impossible for a man to support a family growing corn in Mexico. The poor have been forced off their land by cheap US grain grown with subsidies from the United States government. So, people have come here to Sonoma to mow our lawns and scrub out toilets and pick our grapes.

It's good honest work and they are grateful for it.

Like Abraham, they left home and set out across a desert as well. Like Abraham, God commanded them to "leave your father's house." And, in an act of obedience, they have placed their trust in God.

And when I think of Abraham, I think of our kids as well.

After mass, the little ones often come up and give me a hug. I like to ask the high school kids about their plans for college. Lots of our young people go to Santa Rosa JC. This is a great school. We have two kids here at Saint Leo's - both from immigrant families - who are going to Stanford.

We have a young woman here at Saint Leo's who graduated from UC Santa Cruz with a degree in finance. Her parents had to leave school after the fourth grade, down in Mexico, in order to work to support the family.

Like their parents, these college kids are leaving home too, in their own way. Like Abraham, they are leaving home and setting out into a future that isn't at all clear. And like Abraham, these kids are people of faith: they are being obedient to God's call even as they trust that God will not abandon them along the way. In fact, I tell these college kids that God is going with them on their journey.

Abraham shows us what faith is. Faith is not believing what you can't prove scientifically. Faith is stepping out into the desert and into the future in obedience to God's call and trusting that God will accompany us on the journey.

The grammar schools and the high school start tomorrow. Our college kids will be leaving home soon. Keep them in

your prayers. They have so much to teach us about what it means to be people of faith.

PART THREE: INSTRUCTIONS FOR *LECTIO DIVINA*

I suggest that you use the readings and my reflections as an opportunity for practicing *lectio divina* ("divine reading"). This is an ancient spiritual practice that started with the great monks in the Syrian and Egyptian desert back in the early days of the Church. It is really quite simple.

Step one: calm your mind (my Buddhist friends describe the mind as "a mango-tree full of chattering monkeys"). I find that paying attention to your breath for a few minutes is a practical and effective way to do this.

Step two: read the readings slowly and attentively. Savor the words as if you were tasting a great Pinot Noir. Don't rush. You are not looking for information or instructions. You are making friends with a sacred text which will bless you abundantly if you will only open your heart to it and let it speak to you. In *lectio divina*, we are not actually "reading" the Bible. Rather, we are "listening" to the Bible as the sacred words speak to us.

Step three: repeat step two.

Step four: read the homily on the readings.

Step five: Ask yourself a few questions:

- What particular words in the readings call out to me most forcefully?
- What is going on in my life such that these words call to me so forthrightly?
- How am I being asked to change, both interiorly and exteriorly?
- In light of this *lectio divina*, how am I being invited to be of service to the world today?