

On page six of this bulletin we have included brief biographies of our new Finance Council members: John Fiore, Tim Jacobs, Bill O'Hara and Donna Quirk. You may know some of them, but now you can learn a little more about their background and families. We are so blessed to have such faith filled and professionally qualified volunteers who are also very dedicated to Catholic education and the Lord's mission here at St. Elizabeth of the Trinity. We already had our first meeting and will be gathering about every four weeks. There is plenty to do, as you may know.

I recently found out the exact amount of the partial sale of St. Thecla property. After the closing costs, \$3,296,246.00 was deposited in a reserve bank account for St. Elizabeth of the Trinity Parish. The gross sale price of the property was \$3,450,000.00. In the interest of transparency, you should know this, but also be aware that even though this money is reserved for the parish it won't be touched until the appeal to the unification is resolved. We can use the interest/dividends though to fund some capital and ministry needs. The next task of the Finance Council is to help come up with a solid investment plan that keeps most, if not all of the principal intact. The parish still obviously needs your involvement and financial support.

Now to our Readings this week which begin with the dramatic account of the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham his father. What we find most difficult in this story is that God asked Abraham to kill someone who was innocent, which is murder. How can God give this command and it not show His other commands to be arbitrary, or even worse, show that God is horrible? When we consider what makes murder evil, we can understand God's command to Abraham better. Murder is wrong because it permanently takes the life of an innocent human being.

But if God gave evidence to someone that death would not be the end, then that would take away the gravity of people dying. In part of the text that wasn't read today, we hear Abraham tell his servants that he and Isaac would go up the mountain alone. He then says: ***"We will worship, and we will come back to you."*** In an even more moving moment when they are alone, we hear Isaac ask: ***"Father, here is the fire and wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"*** Abraham replies: ***"God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering my son."***

These passages show that Abraham knew that God's command would not end in his son's death, even if it meant God would raise him from the dead. Because God commanded it, Abraham knew it could not be wrong and furthermore wouldn't end in his son's death. We are told in the Letter to the Hebrews: ***"By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac...He reasoned that God was able to raise even from the dead, and he received Isaac back"*** (Heb. 11:17, 19).

A New Testament example of this special type of Divine command can be found in Jesus calling Peter to walk on the water. Normally someone on their own trying to walk on water in the middle of a big lake during a storm is going to drown. But if Jesus, who is the Son of God, tells you to walk on water in the middle of a storm, then you can morally do in faith what ordinarily would be sinfully negligent. The point of both accounts is that God has given us enough evidence to trust Him and act with faith. The Lord didn't allow Peter to perish just as He didn't allow Isaac to die...in both cases the Divine command did not end in death. Rather the command was used to reveal the faith of both men to themselves. Abraham acted with great faith...St. Peter with less faith.

We cannot fully appreciate the account of Abraham and Isaac without looking at the foreshadowing involved. Abraham's only begotten son Isaac is like our Heavenly Father's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. In the part of this story we didn't hear today it says that Isaac carried the wood upon which he would be sacrificed up the hill of Moriah. Christ carried the wood of His cross up the hill of Calvary for our redemption.

Even when He tests our faith for our sake, the Lord is revealing His great love and is proving that He is a Father who keeps His promises.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Mike

