

DAY 2**Our Father in Faith**

Yesterday, we learned that it's all about trust. More precisely, we learned that it's all about our lack of trust and that the wound of original sin causes us to tend to hide from God because we doubt his goodness. But there's something else about trust — a key ingredient that will help us better understand what it is, an ingredient that comes from our father in faith, our father in trust: the patriarch Abraham. We all know the story. God put Abraham to the test. He commanded him to sacrifice his dearly beloved son, Isaac. And Abraham was willing to do it. He was willing to prove to God that he loved him more than his own son. And so the test was really all about love, right?

Wrong. It was actually all about faith, not love. Abraham's test was, above all, a test of faith. How so? Let me explain. Abraham's whole walk with God was a walk of faith. For instance, God had called Abraham (who was then named Abram) from his home country: "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And 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" (Gen 12:1-2). Abram believed God's Word, and off he went.

One night, after embarking on his journey, Abram complained to the Lord that he was childless and had no heir. God then directed his gaze to the multitude of stars in the sky and promised him, "So shall your descendants be" (Gen 15:5). Abram believed the Lord's Word, and he was later given a son through his wife, Sarah, though she was beyond childbearing years (see Gen 21:1-3). God promised Abram, who was now Abraham, that through that son, Isaac, he would establish an everlasting covenant with him and his descendants, blessing them with his saving presence and protection (see Gen 17:1-21).

Finally, in Genesis 22, God put Abraham's faith to the ultimate test when he commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. This was the ultimate test of faith because it was through Isaac that God had promised to make Abraham blessed and a great nation. But here God was calling on Abraham to sacrifice Isaac! How could the world be blessed through a dead son? How could Isaac have children if he were killed as a child? Abraham's temptation clearly would have been to think that God is a liar, that he doesn't keep his promises. After all, to kill young Isaac would be to destroy the hope of the promised future blessing through Isaac.

What a hard test! Yet Abraham was ready to go through with it. He was ready to kill Isaac, as he had been commanded.

Why? Because of his faith. The Letter to the Hebrews expresses it best: By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your descendants be named." He considered that God was able to raise men even from the dead (Heb 11:17-19).

There is the marvel of Abraham's faith. He believed God's promise, even to the extent of "hoping against hope" (Rom 4:18) and considered that God was able to raise up Isaac even from the dead. That is faith. That is why Abraham truly is our father in faith. In fact, he teaches us the essence of faith, which is to believe God's Word, to believe that God is faithful to his promises, to believe that God is faithful even if it seems impossible.

Now, as our father in faith, Abraham is the complete opposite of our mother in doubt: Eve. After all, unlike Eve, Abraham refused to give in to the temptation to think that God is a liar, to think that God doesn't keep his promises, to think that God is not good. May Abraham's example of faith help us to overcome the effects of original sin caused by Eve's doubt. In other words, may it help us to trust God's promises and even to hope against hope.

Today's Prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit, fire of mercy.

Please give me such trust in God's Word
that I might even hope against hope.

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Jesus: "My daughter, these are the dispositions of My infinite Wisdom, and it is My custom when I ask some small sacrifice of a soul and she ungratefully refuses it to Me, not to want to trust her any longer. I set aside My plans to raise her up to do great things, and I leave her in oblivion, where no one will look to her for great works or heroism, whether for God, for herself, or for other people. So you must distinguish what I wanted from Adam—a little sacrifice, to deprive himself of one fruit—which he refused to give Me. How could I ever trust him for other things, involving greater sacrifices?

On the other hand, I did not ask Abraham to sacrifice a mere fruit, but I called him to go to a foreign land far from the land of his birth—and he obeyed Me promptly. Then I wanted to trust him even more, and I showered him with graces, and I asked him to sacrifice his only son, whom he loved more than his own life, and he offered him to Me promptly. From this I knew—through a test—that I could trust him, and that I could entrust him with everything. One could say that he was the first man of atonement to whom the scepter of the future Messiah could be entrusted. And that is why I raised him up to be the head of many generations, to the greater glory of God, of himself, and of all peoples.