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2nd Sunday Of Lent (B) 2021

Shortly before he was gunned down by an assassin in Memphis, Tennessee, Martin Luther King (1929-1968) told the assembled crowds, “We’ve got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn’t matter with me now, because I’ve been to the mountaintop. And I don’t mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will. And he’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. . . And I’m happy tonight. I’m not worried about anything. I’m not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.” It was his vision of a better future and his conviction that equal freedom would one day be enjoyed by all Americans that enabled King to have hope when death-threats against him seemed to imperil not only his life but the entire civil rights movement. You may recall how last week we heard about God’s covenant with Noah. Another important covenant is implied in today’s first reading, namely God’s covenant with Abraham. God promised Abraham numerous blessings, including many descendants. In return, “God put Abraham to the test.” He asked Abraham simply to trust Him. And, boy, did Abraham trust God! I can’t imagine a more difficult situation for Abraham to trust. He must have felt great anguish when God asked him to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac. Isaac came within seconds of being sacrificed at

the knife of his own father! The Lord's messenger said to Abraham, "I know how devoted you are to God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son." God put Abraham to the test, and boy, did he come through with flying colors! When I read that line, I couldn't help but question myself on how devoted I am to God. How trusting am I of God? In a sense, Lent is the season of being put to the test. God is the Testor of our hearts. He is testing us to see if we trust His promises or if our hearts are far from Him and we've just been giving Him lip service. Over the last year, the pandemic has certainly shaken the level of trust in God, at least from outward appearances. There is such a fear of contracting the virus, that I wonder where we are in trusting that God is still in charge, even of the virus? The question that keeps going through my mind is how much am I willing to trust God and abandon myself into His hands? In the Gospel, Jesus took Peter, James and John to the mountaintop to witness His transfiguration. Jesus knew that His agony and death were not far away. If His three closest friends could catch a glimpse of His glory, if they could see clearly that He is the fulfillment of the Law and the prophets, if He could impress upon their memories the full truth of Who He is, then, in the darkest hours Peter, James and John might not lose heart and would trust God. Of course, we know that they failed, but after they received the HS, they became fearless and were willing to be martyred for the Faith. So, in the Transfiguration, Jesus was securing their memory of what is to come if they trust.

This is similar to what happened after Martin Luther King's death. His experience of the mountaintop inspired his followers to continue his work, just as Jesus' disciples looked to the mountain top experience of Jesus' transfiguration and were strengthened to further his mission. I think God is sending us tests daily to abandon ourselves and trust in Him. With Abraham and with the transfiguration we see that He keeps His promises. He will not let us be tested beyond our strength. After all, in the transfiguration, He reminds us, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him." How could we not trust Him when we see the depth of His love in His passion and death on the cross? How could we not trust Him when He left us His everlasting gift of His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Holy Eucharist? "In God we trust," is a slogan on our money. This Lent, let's cram for the final exam and make our life of trust in Him speak louder than some slogan on our money.