

Cycle B

2nd Sunday of Lent

Lectionary #26

Reading I: Genesis 22: 1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18

In today's reading, Isaac is about thirteen years of age, and Abraham is advanced in age when a test from God comes to him regarding the offering of his son Isaac. This is not the first time Abraham's faith was tested; however, it is the ultimate test that God places before Abraham's **fidelity**. The reading gives us no indication of any inner struggle that Abraham may have been having with this request to offer his son up to God. Abraham is presented as unwavering in his trust and duty to follow God's command. For his unconditional obedience and **faithfulness** to God, Isaac was spared and Abraham was abundantly rewarded with countless descendants and blessings. For this reason, Abraham is one of the greatest role models of **faithfulness** within the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions.

Reading 2: Romans 8: 31b-34

Today's second reading is brief, but there is much contained in the few words offered. The context for this passage is that the Christians in Rome are being persecuted, and Saint Paul writes to them to assure them of the **fidelity** and **faithfulness** of God. Saint Paul offers the example of God's sacrifice of his own son for our salvation as ultimate proof of God's **fidelity** and love.

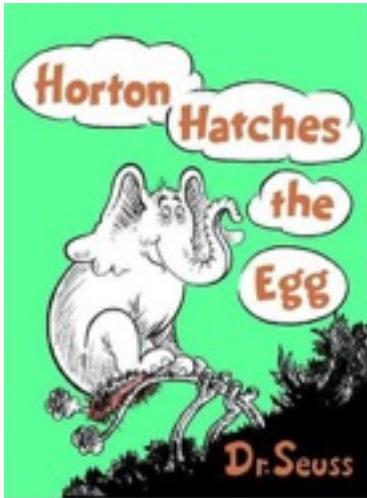
Gospel: Mark 9: 2-10

The Second Sunday of Lent always provides the story of the Transfiguration from one of the three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). This event occurs directly after Jesus' first prediction of his passion. One of the most notable features of the Transfiguration event is the presence of God's voice in the narrative. Recall that God speaks directly only twice in the New Testament: at Jesus' baptism by John and at the Transfiguration of Jesus. Both times, God identifies Jesus as his *beloved Son*. At his baptism, we hear the additional words, *with whom I am well pleased*, and at the Transfiguration, we hear the words, *Listen to him*. In both instances, we see the unique faith, trust, and relationship between Jesus and the Father. There is a radical and irreversible **faithfulness** present.





children's
story



Horton Hatches the Egg

Written by Theodor Seuss Geisel (Dr. Seuss)

Illustrated by Theodor Seuss Geisel (Dr. Seuss)

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character
education
activity

Fidelity is one's devotion to a person or cause to the degree that they will exert great efforts to that person or cause.

Horton Hatches the Egg

This book is classic in many ways, but for our purposes it gives parents and teachers alike the opportunity to teach and illustrate the importance of being trustworthy, **faithful**, and hardworking. The story also allows the listener to recognize that there will be difficulties encountered when being **faithful**.

Absurd concepts, like an elephant nurturing an egg in a tree for a bird, are completely ridiculous, but that is exactly how Dr. Seuss engages his audience. The story involves Mayzie, a lazy bird who no longer wants to attend to her egg, so she convinces Horton the elephant to assume responsibility for the egg. Horton remains **faithful** throughout the story: *I mean what I said. And I said what I meant...an elephant's faithful, one hundred percent.*

Activity: Discussion of the virtues evident in *Horton Hatches the Egg*.

Step One: Explain to the students that the story of *Horton Hatches the Egg* contains many valuable lessons in character formation, such as being true to your word (**faithfulness**), being truthful (honesty), serving those in need (service), sticking through to the end (perseverance), facing your fears (boldness), and many others.

Step Two: Enter into a discussion with the students using the following questions or statements:

1. What does *I give you my word* mean?
2. Did Mayzie keep her word about not being gone long?
3. What does it mean to be **faithful**?
4. What if Horton had been LESS than 100% faithful?
5. Is it possible to be partly faithful?
6. Horton was faithful in the face of death. He made a conscious decision and statement about being **faithful** when he said *Shoot if you must, but I won't run away*. Do you think it would be difficult to be faithful when facing possible death? (This would be a great opportunity to speak of the martyrs of faith)

Step Three: Invite the students to research and report on a martyr in the church.

People who belong to the Church are often referred to as "The Faithful" in that those who belong to a faith community are committing themselves to faithfulness to God and expressing that in service to others.



case study

Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.

What could you do today?

Faith is a gift, but, like any gift it must be opened and nurtured to be of any use. On the left hand side of a piece of notebook paper, make a list of individuals you have a relationship with, including God. Across from that individual's name, place a duty or duties that you have to that person. Think of how **faithful** or **unfaithful** you have been in performing those duties.

From that list, make a chart that will help you keep track of whether you have been faithful to that individual in terms of the duty that you have towards them. For example, the chart might look like this:

Individual	duty	faithful marks
God	daily prayer Sunday Mass	IIII IIII III
Pet	Feed and water	IIIIIIII

Look Feel Know Act

God is always faithful to us and that is easy since God is perfect. We need to work on being **faithful**, and it is not easy to do on our own. The reason Jesus established a Church was for all of us to have others to help us along when we are weak or have difficulties. Think of it this way: there are days when we are not feeling well, and on those days we need the help of others to help us get better. Then, when we are stronger, we are able to be of assistance to those who are not having a good day. When you encounter someone who seems to be sad or down, see yourself as someone who might be able to make their day a little better. By doing such a thing, you are being what is called **active in your faith**. There was a leader in the early church in Jerusalem named James who wrote letters about how important it is to have an **active faith**. In fact, in one letter he said that if you see a brother or sister who is hungry and you have something to give them, then you must give it to them in order to have a **faith** that is alive.

In *Horton Hatches the Egg*, we encounter an elephant who is 100% faithful. This is something all of us want to be in our own lives. We can see from the story and from the various scripture stories that this is not always an easy thing to do. Living a life of faith has many challenges, but we must recall that just as Jesus relied on the Father at every turn, so too must we rely on God and believe that our **faith** in God will see us through no matter what.

There is a phrase that is very helpful and you may wish to commit it to memory: *Never be fearful of an unknown future with a known God.*



closing
tool

Pray always to be a faithful person and ask God to help you see those who are in need and how you might be able to help them and thus be active and alive in your faith. Amen.



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