

Anyone who knows me, knows that I love movies and I especially love *going* to the movies. I love going to the movies because partly because I love the trailers, also known as the previews. In fact, my family and I always joke that the best part of the movie are the trailers beforehand. I just love movie trailers.

And it just so happens that today's Liturgy of the Word contains two powerful divine "trailers or previews" if you will. The first "divine trailer" is contained in the first reading from the Book of Genesis, recounting God's test of Abraham. This mysterious event is a perfect preview of things to come in salvation history—most especially God's plan for the redemption of the human race.

Many times, we can read this story from Genesis and hear how God puts Abraham to the test by commanding him to sacrifice his only son Isaac, and we can get all squeamish and uncomfortable thinking, "God what are you doing? How can you ask this father to sacrifice his own *only* son to You?" Well obviously, God never truly intended for Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, but rather God's *intent* was to seriously test Abraham's faith and trust in Him, and Abraham passed the

test with flying colors. This is why the Church proclaims Abraham to be our “father in faith,” as well as a great model of obedience and trust in God. In fact, one of the key “takeaways” from this whole story is that if we are *humbly obedient* to God’s will and we lovingly surrender ourselves to the Lord and trust in His plan for us, then *ultimately, in the end, everything will be okay* in one way, shape, or form.

And this is exactly what we see in the story of Abraham and Isaac: While Abraham may not have fully understood or even agreed with God’s will, he *nonetheless followed God’s will* in humble love, and obeyed God’s command, *always trusting* in the Lord’s plan. And what happens in the end? It’s basically a “happy ending”—Isaac is totally fine and he goes on to “play his part” in salvation history,

Furthermore, as I mentioned, this whole story of Abraham and Isaac is a perfect preview of God’s own plan for how He wants to save us from sin and death. If we read and interpret the story of Abraham and Isaac *in light of Christ*, then we can come to a fuller and richer understanding of it. Abraham is a prefiguration of God the Father and Isaac is a prefiguration of God the Son, our Lord Jesus. *Like Abraham,*

God the Father is willing to give us His Only-Begotten Son as the ultimate and definitive sacrifice for our sins. *Yet unlike Abraham, God the Father actually does* sacrifice His Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to free us from sin and death.

God the Father's willingness to give us His Only-Begotten Son as the one true sacrifice for our sins is a powerful expression of our Heavenly Father's infinite love for us. When it came to the mission of redemption, God the Father and God the Son, who *is* our Lord Jesus Christ, were in perfect unity and harmony over this divine plan to save the human race from sin and death. God the Son willingly and lovingly conformed Himself to the Father's plan and freely gave Himself up for us as the perfect sacrifice for our sins.

Now let's fast-forward to the Gospel, which is where the second "divine trailer or preview" is contained. The mysterious event of the Transfiguration is a perfect divine "trailer" that previews for us the magnificent and victorious glory of God the Son *after* His Passion, Death, and Resurrection. In fact, the Transfiguration is a divine

“preview” of the Resurrection, when the Son of God will definitively conquer sin and death.

So why did the Transfiguration happen? Well God the Father in his infinite wisdom and foresight knew that the future passion and death of His only-begotten Son would horrify and greatly discourage Jesus’ Apostles and disciples. The crucifixion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ would be so devastating, so demoralizing, and so catastrophic that it would shake the Apostles’ faith to the core and *it did*. So Jesus, taking with Him His closest friends and Apostles, Peter, James, and John, goes up to Mt. Tabor, and is gloriously transfigured before them.

And you might ask, well why are Moses and Elijah there? Well the Jews of the first century AD, certainly Peter, James, and John, knew and understood Moses to represent the Law, the Torah, of the Old Testament, and they also knew that Elijah represented all of the Prophets of the Old Testament. And so for Jesus to be transfigured with Moses and Elijah at His side was to reaffirm to Peter, James, and John that *Jesus is indeed the Messiah Who is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament!* The Transfiguration was intended to

bolster and strengthen the Apostles' faith in Jesus since our Lord's coming Passion and Death would be so brutal, so graphic, and so demoralizing, that they would need to be reminded of Who Jesus was and that they, like Abraham, needed to trust in the Lord's ultimate plan.

In the midst of our Lord's initial prediction of His Passion and Death, which the Apostles didn't understand at that point, Peter, James, and John needed to be reminded of Who Jesus is—***He is the Messiah, the Son of the living God.*** In fact, God the Father makes it explicitly clear to Peter, James, and John when He speaks those beautiful words: “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.” In others words, trust in Jesus, obey Him, follow Him, and don't be afraid.

Brothers and sisters, I think one of the main lessons our Lord is trying to teach us between both of these “divine trailers or previews” from the First Reading and the Gospel is that if ***we truly listen to Him,*** obey Him, love Him, and trust in His plan and His wonderful will for us, then ***ultimately, in the end, whether in this life or the next,*** everything will be okay, ***and not only just okay,*** but ***much better than we could ever imagine!*** In fact, the Transfiguration itself is a marvelous preview

of the Heavenly glory that we will all share with Christ—the Heavenly glory that awaits us if we persevere in faith, hope, and love through any suffering and challenges in this earthly life.

As St. Paul tells us in the Second Reading, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” ***Brothers and sisters, God is on our side!*** And so God’s will for us is our true happiness, our freedom, our holiness, and our salvation and so if we humbly obey God’s will and lovingly trust in His plan for us, especially in the midst of great suffering, then in the end, ***everything will be okay, if not in this earthly life, then most certainly in Heaven***, which is our true homeland. So where right now in our lives do we need to listen more to Christ? Where do we need to trust Him and obey Him more? Where do we need to follow Him more?

As we prepare to encounter our crucified and risen Savior in the Most Holy Eucharist, let us heed those Heavenly words spoken to us in the Gospel today from God our Father: “This is My beloved Son. Listen to Him.”