

## Homily- 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday, C, 2019

Recently Archbishop Fulton Sheen made head line news as his mortal remains got transferred from New York to his home diocese Peoria, Illinois. At one time he was a famous preacher and host of a radio and tv talk shows. Some of you might have heard his talk shows. He used to say that if you manage to reach heaven then there are three surprises waiting for you.

The first surprise: We will be surprised to see that many people we expected to be in Heaven are not there.

The second surprise: We will be surprised to see that the people we never expected to be in Heaven are there.

The third surprise: We will be surprised to see that we are in Heaven.

It is so because our getting into heaven is purely God's Grace. We cannot earn it but with our good life we can cooperate with His Grace. In today's Gospel Jesus teaches us how to cooperate with God's Grace and answers the question who will be saved, when and how.

First of all, we all need to have faith like Abraham as we heard in Second Reading of today which tells us of the faith and patience of Abraham, his wife Sarah, Isaac and Jacob. Abraham was a wealthy but childless pagan in Ur of the Chaldees (modern Iraq). Abraham heard the voice of God summoning him to a different land, where God promised to grant him many descendants. By Faith Abraham left his homeland, accepted God's promise that his descendants would form a great nation and was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac at God's command. Despite obstacles and setbacks, Abraham stayed obedient, *"for he thought that the One Who had made the promise was trustworthy."* Reviewing the faith of Abraham, we admire the Patriarch as he obeyed God and left his homeland for the Land promised by God. He believed that though barren, his wife would conceive, even when she was old and beyond the age of conceiving. He believed that although he was in his old age, descendants would be born of him, these

numbering as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand on the seashore.

When asked to sacrifice his son Isaac, he believed that God could raise someone from the dead and he obeyed God. Abraham had faith in God, patiently waiting to see how the goodness of God would develop. Such faith and patience are the model that all Christians should strive to imitate.

Your ancestors had similar faith like Abraham when they migrated to this country. Leaving their homeland just like Abraham they came to this unknown country for better future for themselves and their descendants, and with this faith in God they were able to build this this country which we call now USA. "In God we trust" written on every dollar bill is the clear example of their faith. Unfortunately, their descendants to day do not have same kind of faith and trust in God. Many people are trying to do away with God in public places. There is crisis of faith even among the Christians, among the Catholics. That is why only about 30 percent of the Catholics are practicing Catholics.

Another way to cooperate with Go's Grace is that this faith should be expressed in serving others as we heard in Gospel today.

"Sell your belongings and give alms.

Provide money bags for yourselves that do not wear out,  
an inexhaustible treasure in heaven  
that no thief can reach nor moth destroy."

And finally, in order to cooperate with God's Grace, we should be always ready, alert and vigilant as we heard in Gospel today. All three of the Synoptic Gospels (Mathew, Mark and Luke) record Jesus' concern for warning his disciples to keep alert, to keep watch over themselves with careful attention. In this passage Jesus is referring to both his final coming in glory as well as his coming to meet us at the time of our individual death. Since the precise time of each is unknown to us, the proper attitude for Jesus' followers is constant watchfulness.

So, let's continue to have strong faith like Abraham our father in faith in God's promises and be vigilant and prepared always serving others.