**“Authority”**

All our readings today point us to the word Authority. All authority comes from God. When we accept the authority of those God has charged to be our servant-leader, we are accepting the authority of God. Rejection of authority of a servant-leader that does not lead us to sin against God, would be rejection of God’s authority. We are made in the image and likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ. To follow Him, we must imitate Him in His obedience to His Father.

In our first reading, from the Book of Genesis, God commanded Abram to leave his family and all the people he had known all his life. God made many promises to Abram. Amongst many of the promises is, the blessings that all the people of the world would be blessed by God through Abram. Abram, trusting and recognizing the authority of God listened to the words of God and obeyed God.

Abram put his gift of faith in God into action by leaving his old life. He left his homeland. He obeyed God’s commandment. His obedience is the beginning of the story of our salvation. We are the recipient of God’s promises and Abram’s obedience to God. We have received the blessing of God through Abram. By our association with Abram, we become children of God and receive endless divine blessings. Our endless divine blessings only comes with our faithful obedience to God’s commandments.

Abram received the gift of faith from God and he embraced God as the one and only true God. God rewarded Abram for his faith, by making him the father of His chosen people. A people God would favor with His revelation and made the center piece of our salvation. Faith without action such as obedience and reverence to God, is no faith. It is an abstract faith that bears no fruit.

Every blessing of God extends to others as well. As Jesus reminds us that God allows His rain to fall on the good and the bad. God is a God of justice who will render to all in the end, according to our deeds. God shared His authority with Abram who shared his servant-leader authority with his son Isaac. This servant-leader authority was handed down from one generation to another. Our continued everlasting joy in heaven, depends on how well we respond to God’s authority in this life on earth as Abram did.

In our second reading Saint Paul in his letter to Timothy, shared that in following God, there would be trials and tribulations. He said, when we have faith in God, we will have strength from God to overcome trials and tribulations that comes our way in this life. He said it is not by our own works, but works working through Christ that Jesus Christ’s grace will work through us.

Paul said that it is when we accept the authority of Christ by obeying His commandments as put forth in the Gospel that we would have the assurance of our immortality. This immortality has been procured for us by the Pascal mystery of Christ.

In our Gospel reading, Jesus took Peter, James and John up the mountain that is considered to be Mount Tabor. On the mountain, His glory was manifested to the three when Moses and Elijah were seen conversing with Jesus. The presence of the two, brought the whole history of our salvation into light. Moses represented the law while Elijah represented all the Prophets. Jesus of course, is the bearer of the New Covenant. The voice of God the Father represented the authority of God.

In the presence of the three, the voice of the Father was heard commanding the three disciples and all His followers to listen to Jesus. ‘Obey’ is not a word that exists in the Hebrew language. So, whenever we hear God say, “listen” or” hear,” they both mean obey. In this encounter with God by the three apostles, God the Father let them know that Jesus has the authority that belongs to Him as God’s Son and we must obey Him for their salvation.

Before Jesus left this world to go back to His Father, He shared this authority with His Apostles who passed it on to Bishops. When Jesus said, **“Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me” (Luke 10:16).** That is why we would be sinning when we do not obey our bishops, except when they might lead us to sin or against Church teachings. Any teachings that would lead us to sin, would not be from God.

Even, to the Scribes and the Pharisees who were bad leaders, Jesus said to the Jews, **“The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice”** (Matt 23:2-3). The “chair” of Moses is the chair of God’s authority.

As we come with utmost reverence to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us ask for His grace so we can fully listen to Him and His Father.