

This morning we are invited into mystery.

An ordinary couple. Abram and Sarai. They are asked to go forth from the land of their kinsfolk. Abram was a nomadic sheik which means he and Sarai traveled with their family and flocks from watering hole to watering hole and from one feeding ground to another. Abram and Sarai had no permanent camp, no one fixed place to call their own.

An ordinary couple - An extraordinary promise - They were to journey to a new land that God would show them. A place on earth to call theirs was equivalent to being given an identity with roots and a sense of belonging.

Abram and Sarai take a huge risk. They said yes to a journey to the unknown. To a land that was part of God's plan. They had just to keep putting one foot in front of the other, in total trust. Abram and Sarai went beyond their own calculations, their own sense of reasoning, their very real fears. And simply trusted in the promise of God.

An extraordinary promise from an awesome God

It is that same awesome God that Peter, James, and John meet on their mountain experience. Encountering the divine can be frightening and overwhelming. As it was for the three disciples. Here again we are confronted with mystery. Jesus was transfigured. His form changed. The friend that they ate and drank with and traveled the dusty, dirty roads with, his face was alive with brilliant light and his clothing beamed a bright white. Peter, James and John see Jesus from a whole different perspective. And not only that. Peter, James, and John saw Moses and Elijah, figures that for the Jewish audience would have summed up the Law and the prophets. Moses to whom God had given the Ten Commandments on another mountain and Elijah the first great prophet in Israel.

We can almost laugh at Peter, because we might very well recognize ourselves in his reaction in the midst of this fathomless mystery. Probably wanting to work off his nervous, frighten energy and almost at the point of trivializing the experience, Peter wants to get busy and put up tents for Jesus and Moses and Elijah. A voice from the cloud says, listen to Him. Can't you almost feel the divine breath of our awesome God? Don't say anything. Don't do anything. Listen to him.

Like Abram and Sarai, like Peter and James and John we have been invited to take the same journey. "To the land that God will show us or to the mountain top" For our elect and candidates their extraordinary journeys will bring them to the Easter sacraments. For all of us that extraordinary journey is the season of Lent which leads to Easter.

It takes courage to accept the invitation. Because our lives will not be the same. We're told Abram was 75 years old, and 175 years old when he died. So we are never too old.

Our awesome God invites us to listen. To pause from all of our busyness and enter reflectively into the deep mystery of God's abiding presence with us. It takes time for our chatter and clutter to quiet down. I guess that's why Lent is six weeks. Listening happens when we stop speaking, when we stop thinking, when we stop figuring it all out, when we stop preparing our responses to yet to be asked questions

Listening for God's voice is sometimes difficult. Sometimes our ears are clogged with the noise and distractions of every day life. Sometimes our hearts are hardened by the news of random shootings, political rhetoric, the injustice of war or our own past experiences. Sometimes our lives are dulled by our own weaknesses and sins.

Listening to God happens when we trust that God is going to show us the promised land or be with us on the mountain top. Do not be afraid.

During this extraordinary Lenten season we have a chance for a deeper reflection on our awesome God's love for us, if we take the time to listen. Do not be afraid.

As we journey to Easter, may we discover that it is good for us to be here. Do not be afraid.

Ordinary people, an extraordinary promise from an awesome God.  
Do not be afraid. Take the time to listen.