

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent (A)

Genesis 12:1-4a; Romans 4:1-5,13-17; John 3:1-17

### *Journeying to Something New*

A change of direction... a new venture... a beginning. All these are all filled with uncertainty. How's this going to turn out? That question must surely have crossed the mind of the 75-year-old we know as Abram. At an age when most people are seeking stability, this man hears God say:

“Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you... So Abram went, as the Lord had told him.”

In other words: leave everything that’s familiar. Set aside all that’s shaped you, and head toward somewhere you’ve never been. Go – without yet knowing where you’ll end up.

To say this sounds scary is an understatement. It’s extraordinary that Abram just got up and went, “as the Lord had told him.” He didn’t even play the age card. It makes one stop and think.

When did we last respond to God’s invitation to step outside our comfort zone – to go somewhere different, do something new, or reach out to someone beyond our usual circle?

If it hasn’t been a while, then perhaps we need to ask how well we are listening, because God is always calling us onward to new things. I suspect it’s because, when we’re surrounded by the familiar, we tend to rely on ourselves and on the ways we’ve always done things. But when we face change – when we’re unsettled – we learn to lean on God. When we step into the unknown and feel insecure, we discover what it means to trust God’s promises.

Paul reminds us that it’s this trust that marks Abram out. Writing to the Romans, he says, that Abram was willing to step out and take great risks, believing that God would journey with him. He also believed that God would do some rather preposterous things through him and Sarai. This elderly, childless couple heard the astonishing promise that one day they would become the ancestors of a great nation.

Through his travels, his mistakes, and some very unpleasant experiences – there’s a recurring theme: Abram’s trust in God. That trust – that willingness to lean on God – is what we call faith. Abram trusted God enough to build a relationship with God, and he was willing to begin a journey with nothing more than a promise to warm him in the night.

And that promise was never only for him. God said: “I will bless you... so that you will be a blessing.”

The blessing Abram and Sarai received was not intended to be hoarded; it was meant to spill outwards. So it is for us. We gather for Eucharist not simply for private spiritual enrichment, but to be strengthened so that we can bless others – to share community, meaning, purpose, and above all the assurance that we and they are known, held, and loved by God. As a faith community we exist for the sake of others – to share with them the blessings we’ve received.

Abram’s journey was lifelong – and so is ours. It requires risk. It involves stepping into the unknown. At times we may look foolish, and we will certainly make mistakes. We may even feel let down by God. But if we look closely, we often find within our disappointments the seeds of a new beginning.

Nicodemus had to learn this too. He comes to Jesus unsure and hesitant. He doesn’t fully understand

what Jesus is inviting him into or what his life might become if he enters a relationship of trust. Jesus speaks to him of being “being born from above” (or “being born again”). This isn’t a one-off event, but the beginning of a lifelong transformation.

I think of those signs you can hang on a motel door that say, “Do not disturb.” For me it’s a daily process of flipping that sign around so it reads: “Please come in and clean my room.” That’s what I’m saying to God. “Come into my life, God. Disturb me. Clean me up. Call me into something new.”

This journey is ongoing and uncertain. We rarely know what we’re getting into – any more than Abram or Nicodemus did. The wind of God’s Spirit blows where it chooses. Some things in life will remain; others will change. But always, always, God journeys with us – giving us the strength, the sustenance, the guidance, and the love we need.

So may we not be content with things as they are. May we allow God to unsettle us, reshape us, and guide us into the new beginnings placed before us.

Gracious God,  
you call us, as you called Abraham and Sarah,  
to leave what was familiar  
and to trust you with the unknown.  
Deepen our trust when the path is uncertain;  
give us courage to follow where you lead,  
and openness to the new beginnings you place before us.  
Guide us by your Spirit,  
steady us with your love,  
and help us to be a blessing to others  
as you have blessed us.

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*Waiapu Cathedral – 1.3.2026*