

HEIGHT REVEALS DEPTH

The scriptures this week once again invite us to enter the paradox of God's love. In Genesis, Abraham is invited to go to the land of Moriah and go to the height that God will point out to make a sacrifice. This sacrifice is to be his son Isaac. How awful the trip must have been knowing with every step he was drawing closer to the place where he would end the life of his son whom he loved. The internal struggle must have been intense. What would he tell his wife if he had not told her before he left? Yet to a height that God would point out, it is there we find the depth of Abraham our father in faith. He is willing to sacrifice his son. We are told that the altar was built and the knife was pulled out when God intervened. This revelation of Abraham's depth and trust in God is revealed at this height.

In the Gospel, we travel to the top of the Mount of Transfiguration. Jesus leads Peter, James and John up a high mountain where He is transfigured before them. Once again revelation happens, a voice is heard saying, *"This is my beloved Son, listen to Him."* On this high mountain, the depth of who Jesus is becomes the experience of the disciples. From high places, where traditionally the view changes, depth from within is revealed. We are invited this week to seek the heights where God longs for us to have a great vantage point, only to have us look deep into the depths of ourselves to see what is to be revealed.

Whenever I have gone skiing, I have always been amazed at the gorgeous vistas seen from the top of the mountain. Yet before I could get to the point of amazement, I had to conquer great fear. I am afraid of heights and a chair lift is not easy on my spirit. It takes me a long while to muster up the courage to go, and then while I am on the chair being pulled up to a high point, I tend to think about the skier behind me and if they will crash into me if I do not get off the chair lift correctly. On ski trips, I would sometimes wake up at night from a nightmare in which I couldn't get off the chair lift, so I was stuck riding it down the mountain to the embarrassment of all. While I loved to ski, and nothing was better than cruising down the slopes, to get there was a journey of internal struggle. What got me to the top? The view. The desire to fight fear.

I have skied in some great places but what I learned about myself means more to me than any slope I skied. Calming nerves, taking the risk to get off the chair properly, looking at ski runs that were beyond my skill level, all of this was the backdrop for what was being revealed on the inside.

God wants to lead us to new heights this Lent, not only for the view but for what will truly be revealed.



Father John Ouper