

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: Cycle "C"
Sunday, 17 February 2019 (SHO/SPW)

CENTURIES AGO RABBI ABRAHAM TRAVELED TO A DISTANT VILLAGE.

- HE BROUGHT WITH HIM:
 - A DONKEY,
 - A ROOSTER, and
 - A KEROSENE LAMP.
- WHEN HE ARRIVED
HE DISCOVERED THE VILLAGERS WERE EXTREMELY ANTI-SEMITIC.
 - THEY WOULDN'T LET THE RABBI STAY IN THEIR VILLAGE.
 - HE ENDED UP CAMPING OUT IN THE NEARBY WOODS.
- BEFORE THE RABBI CALLED IT A NIGHT,
HE OPENED THE SCRIPTURES SO HE COULD STUDY AND PRAY.
 - HE'D BUT GOTTEN A PAGE INTO HIS READING
WHEN A STRONG WIND KNOCKED OVER THE LAMP
WHICH SHATTERED WHEN IT HIT THE GROUND.
 - UNABLE TO READ ANY LONGER, HE TOOK THE DARKNESS IN STRIDE.
 - HIS FINAL PRAYER FOR THE NIGHT:
 - ▶ "ALL THAT GOD DOES, GOD DOES WELL!"
 - WHILE THE RABBI WAS ASLEEP,
SEVERAL OTHER BAD THINGS HAPPENED.
 - WILD ANIMALS CAME AND SCARED OFF HIS ROOSTER ... and
 - THIEVES HAPPENED BY AND SOLE HIS DONKEY.
 - WHEN RABBI ABRAHAM WOKE UP AND
DISCOVERED HIS DONKEY & ROOSTER MISSING:
 - HE AGAIN TOOK THIS MISHAP IN STRIDE, and.
 - HE PROUDLY DECLARED:
 - ▶ "ALL THAT GOD DOES, GOD DOES WELL."
- AFTER A LIGHT BREAKFAST,
RABBI ABRAHAM PACKED UP HIS BELONGINGS &
RETURNED TO THE CITY THAT WOULDN'T WELCOME HIM.
 - AS HE ARRIVED, HE STOOD OUTSIDE THE GATES IN DISMAY:
 - ENEMY SOLDIERS HAD TRAVELLED THROUGH THE SAME WOODS IN
WHICH HE SLEPT:
 - THE SAME SOLDIERS HAD ALSO KILLED ALL THE VILLAGERS.
 - RABBI ABRAHAM THEN BEGAN TO REALIZE THAT:
 - IF HIS LAMP HADN'T BE BLOWN OVER AND BROKEN,
HE WOULD'VE BEEN SPOTTED (and killed) BY THE SOLDIERS.
 - IF HIS ROOSTER HADN'T BEEN CHASED AWAY, and
IF HIS DONKEY HADN'T BEEN STOLEN ...
THEY WOULD'VE MADE NOISE AS THE SOLDIERS PASSED, and
HE, too, WOULD HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED AND KILLED.

- IN GRATITUDE FOR EVERYTHING, GOOD AS WELL AS BAD,
RABBI ABRAHAM once again REPEATED:
▶ “ALL THAT GOD DOES, GOD DOES WELL”

RABBI ABRAHAM HAD THE KIND OF “TRUST IN GOD”
ABOUT WHICH JEREMIAH SPEAKS IN TODAY’S FIRST READING
WHEN HE ANNOUNCED:

- ▶ BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO TRUSTS IN THE LORD, WHOSE HOPE IS THE LORD.
- JEREMIAH THEN GOES ON
TO SPEAK ABOUT HEAT AND DROUGHT:
PERIODS, if you will, OF INTENSE TRIAL AND SUFFERING.
 - HIS MESSAGE IS CLEAR!
 - THOSE WHO have unconditional/unwavering TRUST IN THE LORD,
WILL BE ABLE TO FACE GREAT DIFFICULTIES IN THEIR LIVES,
AND WILL PASS THROUGH THOSE HARDSHIPS SUCCESSFULLY.
- FOR JEREMIAH:
 - TRUST IN GOD DOES NOT MAKE ONE IMMUNE
TO SEVERE HARDSHIP & TRIALS IN LIFE ... no, rather ...
 - TRUST IN GOD TOTALLY TRANSFORMS ONES ABILITY
TO DEAL WITH HARDSHIP & TRIALS.
 - A PERSON WITH AN AUTHENTIC “TRUST IN GOD” IS,
as Jeremiah the prophet described,
▶ “LIKE A TREE PLANTED BESIDE THE WATERS
THAT STRETCHES OUT ITS ROOTS TO THE STREAM:
IT FEARS NOT THE HEAT WHEN IT COMES;
○ ITS LEAVES STAY GREEN;
IN THE YEAR OF DROUGHT IT SHOWS NO DISTRESS,
BUT STILL BEARS FRUIT.”

JEREMIAH'S TRUST IN THE LORD BESPEAKS "SPIRITUALLY MATURITY"

- IT'S NOT AS COMMON AS IT SHOULD BE.
- IN FACT,
MOST PEOPLE FACING WHAT RABBI ABRAHAM FACED,
WILL BECOME EXTREMELY UPSET AND IRRITATED!
 - THEY'LL BECOME VISIBLY ANGRY.
 - AND, from a purely human perspective,
WHO COULD BLAME THEM
FOR GETTING ANGRY & UPSET OVER THE FACT THAT
EVERYTHING THAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG, DID GO WRONG:
 - THE VILLAGERS TREATED HIM LIKE HE HAD THE PLAGUE
 - HE BROKE HIS LAMP, LOST HIS ROOSTER, AND
HAS HIS DONKEY STOLEN.
 - SPIRITUAL MATURITY, though, LOOKS AT ANY & EVERY SITUATION
AND ACKNOWLEDGES THAT GOD CAN WORK THROUGH THIS, TOO!
 - WHETHER THE RABBI RECOGNIZED IT AT THE MOMENT OR NOT,
HIS CONSISTENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT THAT:
"ALL THAT GOOD DOES, GOD DOES WELL!" ...
IS AN EXPRESSION OF UNCONDITIONAL FAITH!

NO ... GOD DOES NOT CAUSE EVIL, but
HE WILL USE EVERY OCCASION WHERE EVIL & HARDSHIP EXIST ...
TO BRING ABOUT SOME GOOD FROM IT!

- IN THE HEAT & ANGER OF A HARDSHIP, or an encounter with evil,
IT'S HARD TO COMPREHEND THAT ANYTHING GOOD CAN COME OF IT ...
BECAUSE THAT GREATER GOOD IS OFTEN BEYOND THE HORIZON.
 - IT WAS LIKELY THAT WAY FOR RABBI ABRAHAM:
 - HAD HE NOT RETURNED TO THE VILLAGE
the morning after his lamp broke, and
his donkey and rooster were lost ...
HE MIGHT NEVER HAVE COME TO REALIZE AND APPRECIATE
HOW THE LORD HAD PROTECTED HIM THE NIGHT BEFORE.
- SELDOM IS IT AS READILY APPARENT AS IT WAS FOR
BOB PILLITARE – OF NEW FRANKLIN, OHIO JUST LAST WEEK.
 - YOU MAY HAVE SEEN THE NEWS REPORT ON TV8.
 - A 71-YEAR OLD, the night of those heavy winds,
OPTED TO GO TO BED EARLIER THAN USUAL.
 - NO SOONER HAD HE CLIMBED INTO BED
THAN A 100yo TREE TOPPLED AND CRUSHED THEIR FAMILY ROOM,
RIGHT OVER THE CHAIR HE'D OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN SITTING IN.
 - AS BOB SAID IN THE NEWS REPORT, IF NOT FOR GOING TO BE EARLY,
"I MIGHT'VE BEEN DEAD, FOR ALL I KNOW."

<https://fox8.com/2019/02/08/god-was-watching-out-for-us-huge-tree-falls-on-family-home-in-summit-county/>

- HOW HAS GOD USED something like THE EVIL OF HUNGER FOR GOOD???
- IN WELLINGTON, THE HELPING-HANDS FOOD PANTRY just celebrating it's 1-year anniversary, HELPS 50-70+ FAMILIES PER MONTH WITH FOOD & SUPPLIES.
 - IT'S HEIGHTENED OUR AWARENESS AS A PARISH TO THE NEEDS IN OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY.
 - IT'S CALLED US TO BE GENEROUS:
 - WITH OUR FINANCES ...
 - because we're always able to pay our bills, AND
 - WITH OUR TIME ...
 - given the countless volunteers needed to make it a success;
- IN OBERLIN, THERE'S THE SACRISTY FOOD PANTRY ... OBERLIN COMMUNITY SERVICES ... AS WELL AS THE ADVENT GIVING TREE OUTREACH ENDEAVORS.
 - WHENEVER THE SHELVES OF THE PANTRY ARE LOW A QUICK "SHOUT-OUT" IN THE BULLETIN HAS THEM RESTOCKED.
 - AS FOR THE ADVENT GIVING TREE, I SPOKE WITH A NUMBER OF SHOCKED PARISHIONERS:
 - WE'VE NEVER DISTRIBUTED ALL THE ORNAMENTS THE 1ST WEEK.
 - I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY'VE ALL BEEN TAKEN.
 - THE GIVING TREE FEEDS THOSE WHO, although not physically hungry MAY BE STARVED FOR COMRADERY & FRIENDSHIP.
- IN RECENT YEARS THERE'VE BEEN MANY NATURAL DISASTERS?
 - WHO CAN FORGET THE LIKES OF FLORENCE OR MICHAEL?
 - AT ST. PAT'S I WAS BOWLED OVER BY THE EXTREME GENEROSITY!
 - WE COLLECTED SEVERAL TIMES OUR USUAL WEEKLY COLLECTION IN SUPPORT OF THOSE WHO LOST EVERYTHING.
 - IF YOU WILL, GOD ALLOWED US TO BE CHANNELS THROUGH WHOM HE COULD BRING ABOUT INCREDIBLE GOOD FROM AN OTHERWISE HORRIBLE SITUATION.

"ALL THAT GOD DOES, GOD DOES WELL!"

- MAY THOSE WORDS OF TRUST BE ALWAYS IN OUR HEARTS:
 - NOT ONLY IN THOSE MOMENTS WHEN WE RECOGNIZE THE GREAT GOOD GOD CAN ACCOMPLISH IN THE SHADOW OF HARDSHIP AND TURMOIL ...
 - but may they be in our hearts
 - IN THOSE MOMENTS WHEN WE DON'T SEE ... AND STILL HAVE THE STRENGTH TO PLACE OUR TRUST IN HIM!!
- FOR ALL THAT GOD DOES ... GOD DOES WELL!!!!