

## March 5, 2023 — 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent

### Readings

Genesis 12:1-4A;  
Psalm 33: 4-5, 18-19, 20, 22;  
2 Timothy 1: 8B-10;  
Matthew 17: 1-9

*You are social poets, because you have the ability and the courage to create hope where there appears to be only waste and exclusion.... I am convinced that your dedication is above all a proclamation of hope. Seeing you reminds me that we are not condemned to repeat or to build a future based on exclusion and inequality, rejection or indifference; where the culture of privilege is an invisible and insurmountable power; and where being exploited and abused are common methods of survival. No! You know how to proclaim this very well. Thank you.*

— Pope Francis, message to the 4<sup>th</sup> World Meeting of Popular Movements, October 16, 2021

## Creating Hope

Today's readings show us men who courageously left their lives behind, answering the Voice from the heavens that called them to a new life, a new way of being, a new nation, a new world order. They left everything they knew and dedicated their lives to the mission God gave them, to build a community based on the principles of love and dignity.

Am I as willing as Abram, Paul, Timothy, Peter, James and John to reorient my life in such service? Am I ready to leave behind comforts, habits and even worldviews to abide by that voice? Am I ready to really love my neighbours—all of them—the way Jesus taught?

**“This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!”**

Jesus's example is not always easy. He served with compassion, healing, feeding and including wherever he went. He also confronted injustice, disrupting an exploitative temple market, challenging the system of prejudiced punishment and, ultimately, freeing the whole of humanity from death.

For me, following Jesus requires not only that I serve those around me, sharing whatever I can to help my sisters and brothers in their immediate needs, but also that I work to address the global systems that create or perpetuate poverty and exclusion. This means questioning my participation in systems that use exploitative labour, that deny land rights and that put money, rather than people, at the center of concern. It means refusing to endorse abusive systems with forms of charity that reinforce power imbalances. It means building alternatives that support the dignity of individuals, families and communities, by ensuring they are in control of their own development and that we change the laws and policies that have denied their rights and dignity.

To be like Jesus and the prophets in these readings, we have to be ready to leave behind what we have known to build a new nation, a new world order, founded on the love and compassion to which we are called.

**“Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.”**

Lent is a time to return to this hope. To simplify, reduce or do away with all the things that distract from this hope. As we prepare for Easter, we are sent to live the Gospel by our lives.... We are sent to **Create Hope**.

To **Create Hope** is to share the love and truth we have received.

To **Create Hope** is to orient our lives to the service of humanity in compassion and justice.

To **Create Hope** is to witness to the work of the Holy Spirit in communities that are actively building that new world order where all can live in dignity.

To **Create Hope** is to foster alternative social, economic and political models that promote dignity, compassion and inclusion.

To **Create Hope** is to invite others into this vision, this community, this action of building this kingdom, “on Earth as it is in heaven.”

Join us!

In the coming weeks, these reflections will share the work of our partners. Learn with us and act with us so that together we can **Create Hope** for our families, our communities and our world.

---

Author: Kathleen Cross, Project Lead for Strategic Planning, Development and Peace — Caritas Canada