

The proof of a claim is in the action

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mark 9:2-10; (R1) Genesis 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18; (R2) Romans 8:31-34.

Sacrifice runs throughout all three of Sunday's readings. Abraham does not spare his son (R1). God the Father does not spare His Son (R2). The Father's Son is Jesus (R3). Although God spares Abraham's son, He does not spare His own, so great is His love for us!

A famous line in Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is: "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." In other words, the proof of a claim or intention is in the action. Today's popular expressions of this are: "Put your money where your mouth is" and "put up or shut up."

Eliza Doolittle put it his way in *My Fair Lady*: "Don't talk of stars/ Burning above;/ If you're in love,/ Show me! ... Haven't your arms/ Hungered for mine?/ Please don't "expl'ine"/ Show me! Show me!" These no-nonsense expressions challenge anyone making a claim to prove its validity by tangible means.

Abraham proves his commitment to God by placing his only son, Isaac,



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

on the altar of sacrifice. "Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and ... offer him up ... as a holocaust ..." The proving ground is Mt. Moriah and Abraham obeys by going there, building the altar, and placing his son on the altar. "Then ... he took the knife to slaughter his son." But an angel of the Lord put a halt to the test and told Abraham that he had checked out: "I know now how devoted you are to God." (The proof of the pudding is in the action).

The proof of our concern for the hungry is to feed them. The proof of our concern for the stranger is to put out the welcome mat. The proof of our concern for the naked is to put clothes on their backs.

The proof of the vows at your wedding is in what you put into marriage. The proof of your commitment to your work is what you're putting into the job. The proof of a student's sincerity is in how many hours of study he or she is putting in. The proof of your gratitude to God is found in what you put into the Sunday collection. The proof of just about everything is in what you do.

When our founding fathers put their names on the Declaration of Independence they were proving their commitment to liberty and to a new nation. John Hancock noted that he had used a large signature so that "King George could read it without his spectacles." President John F. Kennedy proved the nation's commitment to space by putting a man on the moon. The proof is in the doing.

The essential word to the believer is "prove it!"

Proof of intention doesn't always have to be an explicit statement of acceptance. "Martha, will you marry

me?" She blushes, sighs, throws herself wordlessly into his arms, and embraces him rapturously. It would be a specious defense later if she argued, "But I never said 'yes.'" The proof is in action, not in the word.

At Jesus' transfiguration, Moses and Elijah talk about His coming sacrifice. Jesus' willingness to sacrifice Himself draws a voice of approval from heaven — "This is my Son, my beloved. Listen to him." His proof is in His cross. His Father's approval is in raising Him from the dead.

As we begin the second week of Lent, the church reminds man, transfigured by baptism, that his faith will be tested; that all love must be subordinate to the love of God; that the only way to be strong is to have faith in God, as Abraham did; that God will never fail those who trust in Him; that after the testing will come the glory — provided we give proof in the testing of fidelity to God.

*Thou the Cross didst bear:
What bear I?
Thou the thorn didst wear:
What wear I?
Thou to death didst dare:
What dare I?
Thou for me dost care:
What care I? The proof?*

Kids' Chronicle Answer Key

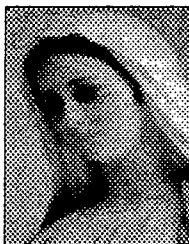
1. Reuben, 2. Simeon, 3. Levi, 4. Judah, 5. Issachar, 6. Zebulun, 7. Joseph, 8. Benjamin, 9. Dan, 10. Naphtali, 11. Gad, 12. Asher

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Ombudsman

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