

Mission Sunday

This weekend is Saturday the 19 and Sunday the 20 October, Mission Sunday, beginning the 29th week of Ordinary Time.

The monks of the Abbey of Keur Moussa sing, *Encore un peu de temps*: "In a little while I will make heaven and earth tremble. Then the One desired by all nations will appear. I will fill this temple with glory and to this place I will bring peace."

For most of this week we have listened in on St Paul's conversation with the new Christian community in Rome. Behind all his words lies a desire to build them up in the faith: showing how God reveals himself, praising God's patience, and describing God's merciful response to human sinfulness. Today he pushes back the human experience of faith in our God to Abraham. Abraham and his faith are seen as foundational by Christians, Jews and Muslims. As this weekend's passage from St Paul's letter to the Romans is read through for a first time, hear God's promises to Abraham, the "father of many nations".

Much of the Christian church celebrates today as Mission Sunday. It's a chance to reflect upon how faith is passed on to others. How did you come to your own faith in God, in Jesus Christ?

The image in the reading is of Abraham as the father of a huge family of believers. Remember for a moment some of those "brothers and sisters" who have supported you in living out a faith-filled life.

Paul insists that faith is a gift to us from God, and doesn't depend on our own efforts. Is this a gift that you want to thank God for now?

As you listen to the passage again, notice the wide scope of those who will follow Abraham in his faith. Become aware of all the different kinds of believers that there are in our world today. Can you see this as a way in which God has kept his promise to Abraham?

In these last moments of prayer, speak to God about what this gift of faith means in your own life.