TRUST

We've probably heard the story of Abraham, our "father in faith", numerous times. But what we may not realize is that Abraham had to go through a journey of GROWTH in faith before he became our "FATHER in faith".

If we go through the timeline of Abraham's journey, we may understand more clearly the difficulties that he may have faced. When God asked Abraham to leave his homeland, Abraham was 75. Imagine that you have been retired for five or ten years and then God asks you to leave everything in Calgary and move to the Yukon. This was a great act of faith in obedience to God and this is one of the reasons why Abraham is our Father in faith.

But Abraham left his country so that God could make a great nation of him and give him the promised land of Canaan. This was God's PROMISE to Abraham, but Abraham was childless. Imagine that you have been given this promise and 10 years have passed. You still have no children and, therefore, no direct heir. You are now 85 and your wife is getting along in age at 75. Additionally, Abraham's original name was Abram and that name meant "EXALTED FATHER". Not only are you childless, but every time someone uttered your name, you were reminded over and over again of your barrenness.

God had promised explicitly to Abraham that "Your very own child shall be your heir" (Gen 15:4), but we can now see why he took matters into his own hands of securing his own heir by conceiving a son through his Egyptian slave-girl Hagar when he was 86.

This brings us to our first reading for today. God is now coming to Abraham at 99 years of age saying, "Look, the PROMISE I made to you 24 years ago still stands and even though your faith has wavered I will show you that I am faithful. Previously, you were known as Abram, 'EXALTED FATHER, but now you will be known as Abraham, 'ANCESTOR OF A MULTITUDE' because you will be EXCEEDINGLY fruitful. This is not just my PROMISE to you. I bind myself under OATH to you but I will make an EVERLASTING COVENANT with you and your offspring."

Abraham remained faithful and when he was 100 years old—25 years after God first promised him an heir—Abraham received Isaac as a son.

Abraham did not have perfect faith from the beginning, but eventually he would reveal the true strength of his faith when he was willing to offer his only son through whom Abraham's descendants would be 'numerous as the stars of the sky'. "Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become the father of many nations…being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised" (Rm 4:18, 20).

Letitia Wright had been experiencing depression over the past several weeks but was able to barely get by. She had to because she was getting ready to star in a film with Nicole Kidman and Elle Fanning. This was an exciting opportunity to further her career since she would also be acting with other famous actresses under an Oscar-winning director. But she could hear the voice of God speaking in her heart, "Give up the job." "What are you crazy?" "Give up the job Leticia—I can give you more than that, I can give you more than that" "But its Nicole Kidman!"

Letitia was faced with a choice and she made the heart wrenching decision to leave the job. The agency thought she was crazy, "We just started! What's wrong? Do you need money?" But she just said to her agency in LA, "I just need time with God". Those words just rang in her head over and over again "I can give you more than that. Just come and seek me first." Several years later, freed from depression and on fire to witness to Jesus in her acting career, Letitia is acting in one of the most popular movies of the year, 'Black Panther' which is the second highest grossing film after *Star Wars: The Force Awakens.*

God is faithful and everyday we are faced with the decision to take matters into our own hands or to continue to trust in his word. Will we distrust the Father who loves us or will we strive to attain the heavenly kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world: "Whoever keeps my word will never taste death" (Jn 8:51).