

MARCH 26 2026 FATHER PETER TURRONE

“Very truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.”

So, one of the best courses that we got to take in seminary was Biblical Studies. And when we were studying the Gospel according to John, I remember there were multiple moments when we were gobsmacked. We were just left overwhelmed by what the professor was saying to us. And, we can go to Mass, and hear the Gospel over and over again, but the connections that were being made that day were so profound, it brought a deeper understanding of who God is, who Jesus is, and also inspired and brought to a deeper love for him.

But before I get into that, I'd like to go one step back, and look at the first reading. And it may seem like something insignificant, but as I was preparing, doing the lectio divina on these readings, for a few days I kept focusing on this one particular verse. And it has to do with when God is speaking to Abraham. He says that Abraham, right, he is before the Lord, so he falls on his face. So “Abraham fell on his face, and God said to him...”

So the Lord appears to Abraham, and then he changes his name, of course, he gives him this mission. But what you find, what we find, is that Abraham—Abraham has this profound humility. So, before God, he recognizes his own nothingness, the power, the majesty, and the beauty of God, and his response is to fall before him. To lay prostrate before him.

And when I was ordained to the priesthood, so that was the last experience I had of doing that. So, we'd lay down and we'd be calling on the saints, to prepare to receive ordination. So, why do we lay prostrate? Well, again, it's the total surrender and submission to God. So giving

oneself completely over to the Lord. So there's this profound humility. And because Abraham is so humble, he trusts in God, and God speaks to him. So he is fully attentive to what God has to say. He doesn't presume anything about himself, and as a consequence of that, the Lord says the most beautiful things to him.

He says: “You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations.” Right, “Your name shall be Abraham, and a multitude of nations shall come forth from you.” “...Exceedingly fruitful.” Imagine that. The nations, and the kings will come from for him. So, it's because of his profound humility, like going before the Lord, that he able to actually listen, and what God has to say to him is truly remarkable.

Saint Paul VI used to say that the human person is at the greatest when they're kneeling. Not all of us can kneel, if we have knee problems, or other things, I understand that. But we should— we are a body and soul composite. As human beings. So therefore, praying with our body as a body is also very important. So it's not just enough that we believe, but as a body, we show who we belong to.

I'm reading the biography of Fulton Sheen. And he would spend one hour every day on his knees before the Lord in adoration. And he said that it wasn't all the years of study, and I'm sure part of which contributed to his success in evangelization. But it was profound humility, but recognizing that he is not God. That God is God. And therefore putting everything in the Lord's hands, God was able to do great things for him. Through him, and for him. And with him. And he does this especially with Abraham.

So, Abraham, so gets a sense of what's going to happen in the future. So, in the Gospel, Jesus says, to those who are listening to him, hey says, look, he said: Abraham was excited. He was so happy, to be able to see

this day. So Abraham had a sense, so God had revealed to him, right, so God reveals this to him. And then now his ancestors, so those that are going to come after him...

Unfortunately those that are coming after Abraham, there are many who accept Jesus, but there are many who do not. And unfortunately, there are some of Abraham's spiritual children who are hard-hearted, they lack humility. So, they are closed to what they see before them. Despite the fact that Jesus is performing all these miracles. Everything that God had prophesized through Isaiah. And these religious leaders, knew what the Messiah was going to do. They refused to accept it. So, they had this conception of the Messiah. He had to be a certain way. They were locked in their own pride. Because Jesus was calling them to conversion, and yet many of them— not all of them, many did, but many of these leaders refused to repent.

We could look at all of these things together. We look in the past, just a few months ago we were looking at the baptism of our Lord. So, the Lord is the one that comes, you know, John the Baptist is overwhelmed by the sea, and Jesus arrives there. And then the religious leaders, what are they doing? They're standing on the side, and they're watching. But Jesus says, Look, you don't want to weep, you don't want to celebrate. You're just standing on the side doing nothing. You're not making a decision.

But the Lord is before us, and he wants to reveal himself to us. But the first condition is humility. So, we pray as bodies, as we can. If we can lay prostrate before the Lord, or kneel, then we should do it. But if we can't, or we can even lay down, but we can still be as proud as a peacock. So what that means is, that inwardly, we need and have to ask God for the grace to have humility of heart. Which means to recognize

that I'm not God, you're not God, only Jesus is God. And therefore, once I acknowledge that, there's an incredible sense of freedom. That I don't need to know everything and understand everything. But I can know someone who does, and that's Christ.

And what he has to say to us is remarkable. Think about it. He says: "I am who I am." So going back to that lesson, we were overwhelmed, right, with joy, because the professor was saying, Remember when the Lord speaks to Moses in the burning bush and he says, "Who am I?" He says, "Who are you?" He says, "I am who I am." "Ego eimi." The only time you find that in the New Testament is when Jesus is speaking, and he says it when he says, "The Son of Man will be lifted up, you know that I am." He says, even before Abraham, "I am." Right, when they come to arrest him in the garden, and then Mel Gibson has this in his scene, The Passion of the Christ, when all the guards fall to the side, they're overwhelmed, and he says: "I am." "Ego eimi." Because they recognize that's not an ordinary man, but that's God in the flesh. That's God in the flesh.

And this is who we love, and this is who we dedicate our lives to, and this is who we give ourselves to in prayer, especially as we come towards the end of this holy season of Lent, and we move towards the Sacred Triduum where we meditate with profound sorrow and love. The passion, the death, and the resurrection of our Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ, who is the great I am.