



PO Box 271227 + Flower Mound, TX + 75027 + 1-800-803-0118 + [www.dritaly.com](http://www.dritaly.com)

## Hope in Hardship

[Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio](#)



Imagine: you are ten years past customary retirement age. It's time finally to kick back and relax. You live in a great city where everything is at your fingertips – shopping opportunities, cultural events, all your relatives and lifelong friends. Suddenly God appears and tells you to pack up, uproot your life, and march into an uncivilized wilderness.

This is what happens to Abram in Genesis 12. He lives in Mesopotamia, the cradle of civilization. He's 75 and he and the wife are not getting any younger. He does not even know the name of the God who calls him.

Wouldn't you "discuss" this one a bit? Not Abram. Genesis reports no backtalk, no "yeah-buts." In a fit of understatement, Genesis simply says "Abram went as the Lord directed him."

That's faith. Abram hears a command from a God he can't see, believes that this God must know what He is talking about, and begins a journey to he knows not where. Keep in mind that Paul says "we walk by faith, not by sight." (2 Cor 5:7). That's why Abraham is the great model of faith in the Old Testament. For faith is not just about believing. It's about walking.

Obviously Abraham's choice to walk entailed great hardship. What was the motivation that drove him to do it? Simple. There was something that God promised him that he desperately wanted. He had a lot of things—wife, property, servants, and all the creature comforts afforded by his civilization. Yet he lacked a son. And for a Semite like Abram who had no belief in any sort of afterlife, a son was the only ticket to immortality. A son would, presumably, go out and beget sons, thus keeping his father's name and memory alive. God promised not only descendants, but a progeny so numerous and great that all the communities of the earth would find blessing in Abram's name.



PO Box 271227 + Flower Mound, TX + 75027 + 1-800-803-0118 + [www.dritaly.com](http://www.dritaly.com)

So it was desire for future glory that enabled Abram to put up with the hardships entailed in answering the call. This desire is called hope.

About 1900 years later, St. Paul writes these words to Timothy “bear your share of the hardship which the Gospel entails (2 Tim 1:8). To be a Christian during the first 300 years meant risking everything. If the Romans caught you, it could mean torture or death or, if you got off easy, the confiscation of all of your possessions. Why would people take this chance? For the same reason Abram embraced hardship-hope. They had been given a vision and a promise of eternal glory. They understood that no earthly good could compare with this everlasting joy and so were willing to suffer whatever loss necessary in order to secure it. In this, they followed their master who “for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.” (Heb 12:2.)



Aware of the trauma the apostles would shortly suffer through the horror of his crucifixion, the Lord Jesus gave their leaders a vision of hope to sustain them. He went up on Mount Tabor and at last appeared as he really was. In anticipation of his risen glory, the Light of the World allowed the dazzling white of his divinity to be revealed. The Law and the Prophets bore witness to Him through Moses and Elijah. The Father’s voice boomed the affirmation that this was his beloved son. The Holy Spirit was manifested as the shekinah cloud of glory which had led the Israelites on their desert journey. This transfiguration is a scene that proclaims the whole gospel, the Good News of a glorious life, won by the Savior, that lasts forever.

But the experience itself did not last forever. It was not given to them so they could erect tents and stay there. There was still walking to do. The path called the *Via Dolorosa* lay before Him and before them as well. The experience called the Transfiguration was to show them that this way of the cross was not a road to death but through death to a life that makes even death seem but a trifle.

*This article originally appeared in [Our Sunday Visitor](#) as a reflection on Genesis 12:1-4, Ps 33, 2 Tim 1:8-10 and Mat 17:1-9, the readings for the 2nd Sunday of Lent, cycle A and is reprinted here with permission.*

---

### **[Making the Most out of Lent - CD](#)**

Lent is not just about giving up junk food – it is about improving your own spiritual nutrition, and sharing the bread of life with a hungry world. In this talk you'll learn about the biblical and historical origins of the season, how we got the idea that Lent is about "giving stuff up," and how we can nourish ourselves spiritually so that we'll be different people when the Easter Alleluias finally sound in our ears this year.

