

*When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his older son and said to him, 'My son'; and he answered, 'Here I am.' He said...'go out into the field and hunt game for me, and prepare for me delicious food...and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.'*

Genesis 27:1,3-4.

In the very name of Isaac there is a reminder of his miraculous birth, for at its root is the word for 'laughter', reminding us of Sarah's incredulous laughter that was turned to a laugh of joy. Yet Isaac's story is a complex one. We see him taken to Mt Moriah where he is almost offered as a sacrifice to God, and we note that he is not beyond dishonesty when circumstances become difficult. In that chapter from which our text comes he is contemplating the last stages of his life and the legacy that he will leave behind him. He is deceived by his son Jacob, and the blessing of the first-born goes to him, rather than to his brother Esau who should have been the legitimate recipient.

This part of Isaac's story tells us that the real legacy any of us leaves behind is not to be counted in possessions or territory, but what we stamp in the hearts of others through the love that we share. Isaac leaves behind a model of relationship with God, a gift far more bountiful than fiscal worth. His life may have been a complicated one, but God was able to use it to share more of his purposes for the world. How can we use Advent as a time to think about whether the legacy we will leave behind is equal to the potential within us?