

# Turning to God



## I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

### FIRST READING (Exo 3:1-8a.13-15)

#### *Moses and The burning bush*

<sup>1</sup>\* Meanwhile Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian. Leading the flock beyond the wilderness, he came to the mountain of God, Horeb. <sup>2</sup>There the angel of the LORD\* appeared to him as fire flaming out of a bush. <sup>3</sup>When he looked, although the bush was on fire, it was not being consumed. <sup>3</sup>So Moses decided, “I must turn aside to look at this remarkable sight. Why does the bush not burn up?”

#### **God calls Moses**

<sup>4</sup>When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to look, God called out to him from the bush: Moses! Moses! He answered, “Here I am.” <sup>5</sup>God said: Do not come near!<sup>6</sup> Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. <sup>6</sup>“I am the God of your father,” he continued, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

#### *The Call and Commission of Moses.*

<sup>7</sup>But the LORD said: **I have witnessed the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry against their taskmasters, so I know well what they are suffering. <sup>8</sup>Therefore I have come down\* to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them up from that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey.**

#### *Moses asks for the Name of God*

<sup>13</sup>“But,” said Moses to God, “if I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what do I tell them?” <sup>14</sup>God replied to Moses: I am who I am.\* Then he added: This is what you will tell the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you.

<sup>15</sup>God spoke further to Moses: This is what you will say to the Israelites: The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you./ This is my name forever; <sup>16</sup>this is my title for all generations.

**THE FOCUS: The Liberation of the People of Israel**

## COMMENTARY

- God reveals himself to Moses. God appears in the form of the burning bush (to get his attention, Moses is busy pasturing the flock of his father-in-law). God speaks. He calls the name of Moses.
- God is in control of Moses. Moses attempted to control God, but God knows how not to be controlled.
- God discloses himself as the God of their fathers. God can be better introduced and remembered by associating him with their forefathers, with their history.
- God expresses to Moses his concern: the suffering of his people and his plan to liberate them. And now, God announces to Moses what he is going to do with the Israelites who are suffering from oppression.
- He is going to liberate them, to free them from slavery of Egypt, from the slave drivers. God is sending Moses to talk to the Israelites and negotiate their release with the pharaoh. (not in the text).

## REFLECTIONS

God comes to us anywhere, anytime.

### SECOND READING (1 Cor 10:1-6, 10-12)

#### *Exodus People*

<sup>1</sup>\* “I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, <sup>2</sup>and all of them were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. <sup>3</sup>All ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup>and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from a spiritual rock that followed them,\* and the rock was the Christ. <sup>5</sup>Yet God was **not pleased** with most of them, for they were struck down in the desert.

<sup>6</sup>These things happened as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil things, as they did.

#### *Corinthians, warned not to grumble*

<sup>10</sup>Do not grumble as some of them did, and suffered death by the destroyer. <sup>11</sup>These things happened to them as an example, and they have been written down as a warning to us, upon whom the end of the ages has come.\* <sup>12</sup>Therefore, whoever thinks he is standing secure should take care not to fall.\*

**THE FOCUS: On Being Pleasing to God**

**REFLECTIONS**

We should learn from the past experiences. As Christians we should not abuse God’s patience and goodness.

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**GOSPEL READING** (Lk 13:1-9)

**Galileans**

<sup>1\*</sup> At that time some people who were present there told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices.<sup>2a</sup> He said to them in reply, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other Galileans? <sup>3b</sup>By no means! But I tell you, if you do not **repent**, you will all perish as they did!

**Eighteen people at Siloam**

<sup>4</sup>Or those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them<sup>5</sup> —do you think they were more guilty than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem? <sup>6</sup>By no means! But I tell you, if you do not **repent**, you will all perish as they did!”

**The Parable of the Fig Tree**

<sup>6\*</sup> <sup>c</sup>And he told them this parable: “There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none, <sup>7</sup>he said to the gardener, ‘For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none. [So] cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?’ <sup>8</sup>He said to him in reply, ‘Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; <sup>9</sup>it may bear fruit in the future. If not you can cut it down.’”

**THE FOCUS: Repentance**

**COMMENTARY**

- The main point of the two stories with their own interpretations is to warn us. Repentance is the name of the game. If we don’t repent (change, convert), the same thing will happen to us. We will not be better off than those who experienced catastrophe. We too will perish.
- The parable of the fig tree is an example of how God can be so determined to destroy an unproductive tree. But with the intervention of a determined gardener, caretaker, God can give chances. After having done everything (soil prepared, etc), the tree does not yet bear fruit, then it has no reason to exist.

**REFLECTIONS**

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**II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR HOMILY/SHARING**

Begin by relating your experience on displeasing or pleasing people, God. (*It is hard to please people. It is impossible to please everyone. We can displease people without knowing it.*)

Is it difficult to please God? No.

We please God by being appreciative of his actions, interventions to us (First Reading).

We please God by taking cue from the experience of the Israelites journeying in the desert, by not repeating their mistakes (Second Reading).

We please God by repentance, by being productive (Gospel Reading).

The goal of our lives must be to please God.

We must be pleasing in God’s sight.

We cannot be pleasing to God, if we are always complaining (also to people).

We can never be pleasing to God if we have not learned anything from the past, from the Israelites in the desert.

We can never please God if we are obstinate in our sinfulness, we refuse to change, if we prefer to live in sin. In sin, we court disaster.

Sin here is: ungratefulness, wanting to return to slavery (First Reading), refusal to learn from experience, forgetfulness, ignoring warnings (Second Reading), being unrepentant, refusal to change, unable to bear fruit (Gospel)

In our families, church, communities and society, our goal is to make ourselves pleasing to God and to others.

People will begin to like us when we stop finding faults of others.

People will begin to like us when we are appreciative of what other people do to us even if it is not perfect.

Our children will like us if they see us more interested in them, if we have more time with them.

People will like us when we talk to them eye to eye, with a smile on our face.

God will like us more when we translate our conversion to productivity and contribution to the well-being and liberation of others.

In this eucharist, we thank God for giving us Jesus Christ, who is most pleasing in his eyes. Jesus did not complain when he was abandoned by his friends and was suffering. The eucharist strengthens us in our struggle to please God.

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