

Sunday Readings

23rd March 2025

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of Exodus 3:1-8. 13-15

In those days: Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, 'I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.' When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then he said, 'Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' And he said, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the LORD said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey.'

Then Moses said to God, 'If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you", and they ask me, "What is his name?" what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' And he said, 'Say this to the people of Israel: "I AM has sent me to you."' God also said to Moses, 'Say this to the people of Israel: "The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you." This is my name for ever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.'

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 102: 1-4. 6-8. 11. R/. v.8

R/. The Lord is compassion and love.

My soul, give thanks to the Lord
all my being, bless his holy name.
My soul, give thanks to the Lord
and never forget all his blessings. **R/.**

It is he who forgives all your guilt,
who heals every one of your ills,
who redeems your life from the grave,
who crowns you with love and compassion. **R/.**

The Lord does deeds of justice,
gives judgement for all who are oppressed.
He made known his ways to Moses
and his deeds to Israel's sons. **R/.**

The Lord is compassion and love,
slow to anger and rich in mercy.
For as the heavens are high above the earth
so strong is his love for those who fear him. **R/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the
Corinthians 10:1-6. 10-12

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

GOSPEL

Luke 13:1-9

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.
Glory to you, O Lord.

There were some present at that very time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered them, 'Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.'

And he told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vine dresser, "Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?" And he answered him, "Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig round it and put on manure. Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down."'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Third Sunday of Lent

Lectionary Year C

The Word of God

Saint of the Week

Moses was busy about his daily work, simply doing his job of tending the sheep of his father-in-law's flock. And in the midst of this ... in the midst of doing something that probably had become quite ordinary and mundane ... something very unusual happens. Moses sees this burning bush – a bush on fire yet not consumed. This “burning bush” experience proved to be a turning point, a decisive moment in his life that helped him understand his true purpose in life, being called by God to be the one to lead the Israelites out of slavery and – eventually – toward freedom and the Promised Land. Such “burning bush” experiences are not infrequent in Sacred Scripture, nor are they infrequent in the lives of holy women and men throughout history, women and men who do great things because of what they understand God to be asking of them.

- For Mary of Nazareth, her experience of the angel-messenger lead her to say “yes” to something she didn't fully understand, but which she knew was from God.

In more recent times

- The self-described unbeliever, Thomas Merton, found himself drawn to a Catholic liturgy in a New York City church that changed his life and set him down an unpaved road of conversion, faith, and mystic spirituality, ultimately becoming one of the most influential Catholic writers of the last century.

- For Teresa of Calcutta, her “call within a call” came on a train ride on the way to annual retreat when she was still a Sister of Loreto, a call she would describe as Jesus' own plea to “satisfy his thirst” by serving the poorest of the poor.

These are all examples of moving and dramatic “burning bush” experiences. They are identified in the lives of those who lived them as singular turning points, events that had the power to change the course of their lives and – in some cases – the course of history.

We all have busy lives, filled with responsibilities at work or at home. We are constantly on the go, constantly moving from one thing to the next. Lent invites us to slow things down and experience the world – which, almost by definition, is an experience of God – in new and different ways. It's a time for us to rekindle a ‘burning bush’ experience we ourselves may have had in our past; or it's a time to allow the experiences of others to ignite our minds and hearts to see the revelation of God in our midst. It is a time to allow our Lenten practices to be “planned opportunities” – providing the time and the space and the freedom in which we may become just that much more attuned to the possibility of an unplanned encounter with God.

Tuesday 25th March 2025



The two greatest miracles of the Annunciation are these: that God gave Mary the wisdom to know the consequences of her decision, and that he gave her the grace not to be overwhelmed by that knowledge.

When we come to an important decision in our lives, we can easily find our minds clouded by the possible consequences, or, even more, by partial knowledge of them. How can we ever move, when there is so much good and evil whichever way we go? The Annunciation gives us the answer. God's grace will give us the strength to move. After all, God does not demand that our decisions should be the correct ones (assuming that there even is such a thing), only that they should be rightly made.

There is one more truth that the Annunciation teaches us. The Almighty Father creates heaven and earth, the sun and all the stars; but when he really wants something done, he comes, the Omnipotent and Omniscient, to one of his poor, weak creatures — and he asks.

And, day by day, he keeps on asking us.

Prayer of the Week

A Prayer in Spring - A Poem by Robert Frost

Oh, give us pleasure in the flowers to-day;
And give us not to think so far away
As the uncertain harvest; keep us here
All simply in the springing of the year.

Oh, give us pleasure in the orchard white,
Like nothing else by day, like ghosts by night;
And make us happy in the happy bees,
The swarm dilating round the perfect trees.

And make us happy in the darting bird
That suddenly above the bees is heard,
The meteor that thrusts in with needle bill,
And off a blossom in mid air stands still.

For this is love and nothing else is love,
The which it is reserved for God above
To sanctify to what far ends He will,
But which it only needs that we fulfil.