

**The Old Testament: Exodus 3:1-15**

Reader: A Reading from the Book of Exodus.

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "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 observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" He said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain." But Moses said to God, "If I come 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 shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I am who I am." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I am has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall 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, and this my title for all generations."

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

**The Epistle: I Corinthians 10:1-13**

Reader: A Reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized 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, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness. Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.” We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

**The Holy Gospel: Luke 13:1-9**

At that very time there were some present who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.” Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

Psalm 63:1-8

- 1 O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; \*  
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you,  
as in a barren and dry land where there is no water.
- 2 Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place, \*  
that I might behold your power and your glory.
- 3 For your loving-kindness is better than life itself; \*  
my lips shall give you praise.
- 4 So will I bless you as long as I live \*  
and lift up my hands in your Name.
- 5 My soul is content, as with marrow and fatness, \*  
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,
- 6 When I remember you upon my bed, \*  
and meditate on you in the night watches.
- 7 For you have been my helper, \*  
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.
- 8 My soul clings to you; \*  
your right hand holds me fast.

## *The Third Sunday in Lent—Year C*

Welcome to our church. Today we come to the next major stage in the ancient story of the history of salvation, the time of the Exodus and Passover. Here Moses meets God in the burning bush and is given his vocation of leading God's people from slavery into the freedom of the land of promise. Our own Exodus and Passover takes place in baptism. All baptized persons are members of the community of God's people, and in them that saving work continues. In Lent, the baptized and those preparing for baptism are rediscovering their vocation as members of the community who come to the waters.

The second reading today sees the Exodus/Passover event of Israel as a foreshadowing of the life of the church—the crossing of the sea prefigures baptism, and the manna in the wilderness foretells the Eucharistic feast. Paul warns, however, that just as the Exodus event did not protect those Israelites who later refused to obey God from the consequences of disobedience, so we members of the church cannot rest on the blessings of baptism and Eucharist but must also live in obedience to God's Word.

The Gospel reading today find Jesus responding to a question of whether natural and man-made tragedies are acts of God toward sinners. Jesus' response is "no," but he warns us that even so, we must repent and change. Those who believe that God uses disaster to punish sinners will, when faced with their own death, think they also are dying because of their sin, failing to see the redemption that God is bringing in the dying and rising of Jesus.

The liturgy and the sacraments are not ends in themselves but means by which God's people are strengthened in living the life of the risen Lord in hope and in mutual love and ministry.

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