

The Third Sunday of Lent Cycle C 2013

God recognized that his people are suffering in Egypt and decided to act. They did not know him, but he knew them because they are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to whom he had made promises. Faithful to his promises God came to their rescue. God needed the help of a human to carry out his plan to free them from slavery and to lead them to a "land of milk and honey". God recognizes the suffering of his people today, and he needs someone to help him. You are that someone, and our brothers and sisters in Christ are the ones who are suffering.

God called Moses who responded promptly, but once he received the details of his mission which was not read today, he was skeptical of his ability to carry out the mission. However, God would accomplish what he wished to do through Moses. He can also accomplish a lot through those of us who are willing to serve him.

In Corinth, Saint Paul discovered that those who were baptized and were partaking of the Lord's supper, believed that these two sacraments were sufficient for their salvation. Saint Paul suggested that the Jews had undergone a symbolic baptism when they passed through the Red Sea, and they had also partaken in a type of Eucharist: water from the rock and mana from heaven. Just like the Israelites who died in the desert, those who believed that these two sacraments alone, would gain eternal salvation for them, could not enter the Kingdom of God, unless they bear good fruit: acts of loving kindness.

In the Gospel, Jesus told the crowd that those who were murdered by Pilate near the altar of sacrifice (those who had their blood mixed with that of a sacrifice), and those who had been killed by a falling tower were no guiltier of sins than

those who lived in Jerusalem. Those who are still alive needed to repent, as they would perish spiritually. God is like the owner of an orchard who had a fig tree that had not produced any fruit for three years and he wanted to cut it down. However, his gardener (Jesus) pleaded for more time so that he could cultivate the ground around the tree and to fertilize it. If it still failed to produce fruit it can be cut down. Good fruit in the Jewish scripture is always associated with acts of loving-kindness. Unless we generate acts of loving kindness, we shall be cut off from God. God is patient with our faults but we should not assume that we can continue to neglect our spiritual life without severe consequences.

Repent and perform acts of kindness!