

EXODUS

Breaking the chains that bind us



FOURTH WEEK OF LENT 2020

Daily Reflections on the Book of Exodus

**Parish of St. Joseph
Morningside**

MONDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT: 23 March 2020

Day 23. Read Exodus 23

Last week, we read Chapter 20 which contains the Ten Commandments. For Israel to be a kingdom of priests and administer God's blessing to all nations they need to be a holy people. Therefore, God gives them the Ten Commandments, which aim to shape their lives so that they can receive the fullness of God's blessing and communicate blessing to others. These commandments are rooted in the Exodus story and must be read in that context; reading them in isolation of the narrative often leads to a narrow and legalistic misunderstanding of the law.

Following the Ten Commandments is Exodus 21-23, known as the Book of the Covenant. It is a list of practical laws aimed at governing the people of Israel for their life in the Promised Land. There are repeated directives to treat strangers and travellers with compassion, for Israel, too, were strangers in the land of Egypt. God's compassion on Israel when they were travellers and his liberation of them from slavery, were not only for Israel's benefit, because now Israel is to imitate the Lord and treat others as he treated them. God's law shows how to put the love he showed Israel into practice and thus bless the other nations.

How do I treat others, especially strangers or people who are different from me? How can our Parish become more welcoming and inviting? What am I prepared to do to ensure that all who come to worship with us, will be welcomed?



TUESDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT: 24 March 2020

Day 24: Read Exodus 24

God has given the Ten Commandments. What will Israel do in response? A covenant takes two willing partners; God does not force but instead invites Israel into a covenant with him that will make them his people. Moses communicates all the laws to the people who repeat twice their acceptance, saying, "All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do" (Ex 24:3, 24:7).

Building an altar with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes, Moses and some of the young men sacrifice burnt offerings and peace offerings. Moses throws half of the blood on the altar and the other half on the people. This gesture suggests the covenantal family bond between God and Israel. The two main metaphors used to describe the covenant are that of sonship, with God as Israel's Father and that of marriage, with Israel as God's bride.

Since family members share blood, the covenant ceremony requires blood. Following the covenant ceremony is a meal, another element of ancient covenant practices. Sharing the flesh of the sacrificed animals and eating the meal in God's presence (24:11) becomes a way of sharing the same body and thus becoming one flesh.

The Eucharist we celebrate is a sacrifice that establishes a covenant between us and God. Do I consider myself a child of God? Am I married to God? How strong are my bonds with God?



WEDNESDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT: 25 March 2020

Day 25: Read Exodus 25

After the meal, God calls Moses up the mountain once again. The mountain is wrapped in fire and smoke as Moses enters the glory cloud of the Lord to receive the last of God's instructions. Having received the law, Moses now receives the liturgy.

These laws regarding the way to worship God, come at a key point in the story. Now that Israel has received the Law and the mission to be a priestly people, they will soon leave Mount Sinai to travel back to the land of Abraham – the land God promised he would give to his descendants once he freed them from the land of slavery (Gn 15).

In leaving the mountain, the question arises, “will Israel be living in God's presence?” The liturgical laws revealed to Moses answers this question by making clear that the tabernacle – where God will be always present – and the liturgy surrounding it continues God's presence in the midst of Israel. So, it is like a portable mountain of God (25:9 and 25:40).

Chapter 25 describes the Ark of the Covenant. It was a box made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold. On top of the ark was the mercy seat with two cherubim made of gold. Two poles were threaded through gold rings and used to carry the ark when Israel journeyed; otherwise the ark was kept in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and then, later, the Temple. Inside the ark were the tablets of the law, a jar of manna and Aaron's staff. Where the ark was, God's presence dwelt among his people.

God dwells with us in the Tabernacle of our church. Do I sense his presence with me? How often do I come to adoration of the Blessed Sacrament? Can I do more, especially in these last days of Lent?



THURSDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT: 26 March 2020

Day 26: Read Exodus 26.

Chapter 26 describes the dwelling. It had a wooden frame supporting four successive coverings – a linen cloth, a goat-hair tent, a covering of tanned ram skins and finally a covering of dolphin skin. Within the tent, a curtain was to separate the Holy of Holies from the Holy and another curtain separated the Holy court from the court outside. The Bedouin today make goat-hair tents in the same way! Verses 12-13 describe how the tent overhung the linen, though the verses are not easy to understand exactly.

As I look around our church building, what do I notice? What are the most important furnishings that I see? What do they represent and symbolise for us Catholics?



FRIDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT: 27 March 2020

Day 27: Read Exodus 27

Chapter 27 describes the altar. This was in an open court where animal sacrifices could be burned. The altar seems to have had a step for the priest to stand on although the description is strange: a wooden altar, even if plated with bronze, would have been burned with the burnt offering! This description seems to be out of harmony with 20:24, which allows stone altars.

The court was enclosed by linen cloth hung on posts. The court faced east and was considered an integral part of the dwelling, the space where the public ceremonies took place.

On the seven branches of the lampstand seven small clay lamps were set up to burn through the night. The people were to supply the finest oil for burning.

Why did they face east when making their sacrifice? It was believed that the Messiah was to come from the east. For many centuries, priests faced east with their backs to the people, as they offered Mass. Do you know what direction you face when you come to Mass in our parish? Do you think it is important for us today?

SATURDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT: 28 March 2020

Day 28: Read Exodus 28

Another link between Sinai and the liturgy of Israel is found in the detailed account of the priestly vestments and clothing. In Exodus 28-29 eight articles of priestly clothing are described in minute detail. What is striking is that this account, which covers everything from underwear to turbans, never mentions footwear. Just as Moses was commanded to take off his shoes before God's presence at the burning bush, the priests serving in the tabernacle will be standing on holy ground. Indeed, the word 'holy' is found throughout the instructions for the ark and its surrounding tent and liturgy because it is the place where God will be present.

Liturgy and law serve to bring Israel into an intimate relationship with God. The God revealed in the burning bush and the fiery mountain is going to do the unexpected, he will tabernacle with his people. The portable tabernacle with its tent enclosing the Ark of the Covenant will allow the awesome presence of God to travel with his people. Leaving Sinai, Israel will not leave God.

Do I understand that the Eucharist I receive at Mass is meant to nourish and sustain me in the world? Does it help me to know that God is always with me, even when I am not in church?

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LOCKDOWN (Richard Hendrick)

Yes there is fear. Yes there is isolation. Yes there is panic buying. Yes there is sickness. Yes there is even death.

But.....

They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise you can hear the birds again. They say that after just a few weeks of quiet the sky is no longer thick with fumes but blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi people are singing to each other across the empty squares, keeping their windows open so that those who are alone may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

Today a young woman I know is busy spreading fliers with her number through the neighbourhood so that the elders may have someone to call on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples are preparing to welcome and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary.

All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting.

All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way.

All over the world people are waking up to a new reality; to how big we really are; to how little control we really have.

To what really matters.

To Love.

So we pray and we remember that, yes, there is fear.

But there does not have to be hate.

Yes there is isolation.

But there does not have to be loneliness.

Yes there is panic buying.

But there does not have to be meanness.

Yes there is sickness.

But there does not have to be disease of the soul

Yes there is even death.

But there can always be a rebirth of love.

Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.

Today, breathe.

Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic The birds are singing again The sky is clearing, Spring is coming, and we are always encompassed by Love.

Open the windows of your soul,
and though you may not be able to touch across the empty square,

Sing!

SATURDAY 21 MARCH – SUNDAY 29 MARCH

Saturday 21st 4th Sunday of Lent A Lent Collection Human Rights Day	05.30pm	- Mass (Church) – RIP Donald Gaillard; Special Intention Brian O'Connor
	05.30pm	- Mass (Hall) – Happy Birthday Father Pierre
Sunday 22nd March 4th Sunday of Lent A Lent Collection	07.00am	- Mass – (Church) Pro Populo
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	09.00am	- Mass – (Church) Happy Birthday Joseph Bryington
	09.00am	- Mass – (Hall) Happy Birthday Yvonne De Gersigny
	05.00pm	- Mass – (Church) Special Intention Brian O'Connor
	05.00pm	- Mass – (Hall) Father's Own Intention
Monday 23rd	06.30am	- Mass – Happy Birthday Archbishop Abel Gabuza
Tuesday 24th	06.30am	- Mass – RIP Noelle Loumeau
	05.00pm	- Confessions (5pm – 6.00pm)
	06.30pm	- Mass – A Speedy Medical Intervention – Corona Virus
Wednesday 25th	09.00am	- Mass – Special Intention Margi De Kock; Happy Birthday Anthony Mathonsi
	09.30am	- Confessions
Thursday 26th	06.30am	- Mass – Special Intention Rose Morrow
	09.00am	- Mass – Thanksgiving Cameron Pillay
	06.00pm	- RCIA
Friday 27th	06.30am	- Mass – Those Suffering the Effects of the Corona Virus
	07.00am	- Confessions
	09.00am	- Mass – Protection of those more vulnerable to the Virus
	09.30am	- Confessions
Saturday 28th 5th Sunday of Lent A Lent Collection	06.30am	- Mass – Continued Protection - Fathers Brett, Mtshe & Pierre
	04.00pm	- Confessions (Extended)
	05.30pm	- Mass (Church) – RIP Relatives & Friends Fredericks Family
	05.30pm	- Mass (Hall) – Continued Protection of Parish Staff
Sunday 29th March 5th Sunday of Lent A Lent Collection	07.00am	- Mass – (Church) Thanksgiving Devi Davids
	07.00am	- Mass – (Hall) Tolerance and Patience During Pandemic
	09.00am	- Mass – (Church and Upper) Pro Populo
	05.00pm	- Mass – (Church and Hall) Protection of our Faith Family During the Pandemic