



Things to Ponder

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Third Sunday of Lent – February 28, 2016

Dear Parish Family,

Whoever said it would be easy? The daily news of today details stories of cruelty that are not so different from those of ancient times. Pilate, the Roman governor of occupied Palestine, was known to be a ruthless leader. Rebellious Galileans were tortured and crucified and their blood was mixed with the Jewish sacrificial victims. How could a good God permit such suffering; they must have committed terrible sins? The same must be true of those upon whom a tower fell! Sometimes *evil* seems so concrete and horrific.

Today's gospel and second reading are intended to shake us out of our comfort zones. One of the greatest challenges of our day is complacency. It is an attitude that emerges either from a comfortable lifestyle that does not want to be disturbed or from a sense of helplessness that borders on apathy. It is of that kind of complacency that might be called smugness that the angel said in the Book of Revelation to the Church at Laodicea:

“So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth ... Those whom I love, I reprove and chastise. Be earnest, therefore, and repent.”
(Revelation 3, 16. 19)

With that in mind, the Church today wishes to test the true motives of our elect (those chosen by the Archbishop to receive the Easter sacraments). But, we, too, the already-baptized, are to allow ourselves to be challenged by the Spirit! What difference does this faith of ours make for us and for others? We are all provided with an excellent example of ourselves in the story of Moses today! We find him living the relatively peaceful life of a shepherd. We can presume that he was happily married and had begun a family. All of a sudden, his sense of security was gone? The bush was burning, but not consumed. Might not that be an apt description of a soul *on fire* with the love of God? Moses' life was no longer the same. It was not his own! God resisted providing any other *name* to describe himself than the words *“I am.”* In other words, God is the source of all

being. The Son of God would later specify the nature of this almighty source of love by attaching the *I am* to other descriptions of his saving mission.

After the *elect* are *scrutinized* (Tested), we pray that the power of Christ's resurrection dispel all *evil* from their lives, especially that tendency which we inherit from our first ancestors which we call *original sin*. This prayer is called *exorcism* - a driving out of the power of evil! Just as Moses' acceptance of his vocation changed his life and of those all around him, so also the decision to embrace our crucified and risen Lord by our *elect* will have a ripple effect among us all!

There is a glow about a person whose life is transformed that both attracts and challenges others. How has your faith in God or that of another you know made a difference for you or for others?

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Bill Foley

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