

Homily 3rd Sunday in Lent 2025

“At the time when you hear the seventh angel blow his trumpet, the mystery of God* shall be fully revealed as he promised to his servants the prophets.” (Revelation 10:7)

I love telling jokes which hopefully, capture your attention and keep you interested in what comes next. So here goes! ‘When was the first car mentioned in The Bible?’ ‘When Jesus rode into Jerusalem in his Triumph. ‘When then was the first television mentioned in The Bible?’ ‘Surely it was when God appeared to Moses in a burning Bush!’

God did indeed appear to Moses in a ‘burning bush’, according to The Book of Exodus. Today’s First Reading is rich in information about who God is, whilst still staying faithful to the mysterious nature of the deity. He is a LIVING God who CALLS a wanted outlaw shepherd in the Midian wilderness near Mt Horeb. He is a God who SPEAKS and tells Moses he is ‘on holy ground’ in his presence. He is a God who COMMISSIONS Moses to lead the Chosen People from their slavery in Egypt. He is therefore a COMPASSIONATE God who wishes to be in RELATIONSHIP with his People, a God who sees our oppression and desires to free us from our sin, pain and suffering. So, our God even as far back as The Exodus (most scholars put it at around 13 century BC) is a PERSONAL God who brings Good News to the poor, who wishes liberty for captives and who is determined to set the downtrodden free. This Old Testament God is one with THE Word, Jesus, who proclaims himself The Messiah who brings the same Good News in the Nazareth synagogue at the beginning of his public ministry. Moses, in response to the LIVING God of RELATIONSHIP is perplexed, doubtful and frightened by what God is asking of him and in DIALOGUE enquires, ‘What name shall I give you when I address the people?’ God replies, ‘Tell them, “I AM WHO I AM”’. In other words, I am revealing something of the Godhead to you but ‘I remain mystery.’”

In today’s Gospel Jesus, the LIVING WORD OF GOD, anointed by The Holy Spirit, reveals The Father as a LOVING God who ‘is slow to anger, full of compassion and love and rich in mercy.’ All Jesus asks of us in The Gospel today, to gain forgiveness and freedom from our sin, is that we repent, say sorry, be sincere in our sorrow and humbly do reparation. Jesus underlines God’s infinite love by telling the people the parable of the owner of the vineyard who has mercifully already given the vine 3 years opportunity to produce fruit. Ready now to cut it down, the vine dresser intervenes and urges him to wait whilst he fertilises the tree and digs round it TO GIVE IT ONE MORE CHANCE to produce grapes. God is always willing to GIVE US ONE MORE CHANCE and ONE FURTHER CHANCE TIME AND TIME AGAIN.

Although Jesus says in The Gospel of St John, ‘He who has seen me has seen the Father..’ and is the final revelation of God and despite today’s Gospel revealing the majesty and beauty of God as a loving, compassionate and merciful Father, an all-forgiving parent as in the beautiful and heart-rending parable of The Prodigal Son, God remains mystery. It’s impossible that he be fully understood by the human mind. How does one explain for example, Christ as true God and at the same time True Man? Why did God become a humble foot washing Servant? How can three persons in one God be possible? How can The Resurrection be explained? Simply put, if we were able to explain everything of the nature of God then he would no longer be ‘I am who I am.’, no longer mystery, no longer God.