

Bishop's Reflection – Holy Trinity

“Moses rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him.” This is not the first time he goes up the mountain. The last time ended in disaster. He had been gone for forty days and forty nights and the people had turned against him and against their Lord. They had fashioned a statue made out of gold and had begun to worship it. In his anger, Moses had smashed the two stone tablets, symbol of the covenant of God's covenant with them. He had also ground the gold statue into dust, mixed it in their drinking supply and made his people drink of it.

Moses is not quite sure what to expect from God on his second trip up the mountain. He is much like a student called in to the Principal's Office. Wrath, punishment, a firm reprimand or stricter conditions are all possibilities. Like, in so many cases, we discover more about God after we have messed up than during the time we kept to the straight and narrow.

“The Lord passed before Moses, and proclaimed, “the Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” In no small way, Moses gets a real good look at God and sees God for who he is. “And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.” In his prayer, he calls on this self-same mercy in pardoning the sin of his “stiff-necked people” and to enter into covenant relationship with them.

In his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus further reveals the true face of the Father. He tells Nicodemus that, “God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” Whereas many people are predicting the end of the world as we know it, the wrath of God in response to our many sins, Jesus' words bring hope to a fallen world. Whereas many people are associating today's pandemic to a “day of reckoning”, a time to lay bare our sins and punish them, Jesus' words speak of God's true work among us, the gift of our redemption.

What about “the one who does not believe”, the one who “is condemned already”? What is the reason for their state of condemnation? By not believing “in the name of the only-begotten Son of God” – “Jesus” literally means “God Saves”, they fail to believe that salvation is possible. They are not condemned by God, but their inability (or unwillingness) to believe blinds them from the hope that comes from God's mercy.

What's the result? We feel the need to earn God's love, and our love for him is conditional on how God fulfills our plans. We bargain with God, performing all kinds of sacrifices so that he may find favour with us (or with our request). We approach God as a taskmaster, a tyrant, one who has high expectations, impossible to meet, rather than a Father, a loving parent, one who invites us to love as he loves us. We worship a God who is more liable to pounce on our faults

and failings than one who comforts us in our distress or delights in the little things that we do for him or for love of our neighbour.

On this Feast of the Holy Trinity, we celebrate God's self-revelation of himself to us as a Communion of three Persons, One God, a Dynamic Communion of Divine Love. Through the readings we are invited into fullness of communion with him and with each other and respond to God's invitation to believe in the saving power of his divine mercy.