



The Parish of Saint Anthony Glen Huntly

74 Grange Road, Glen Huntly VIC 3163

Telephone: (03) 9569 2099

Email: glenhuntlycaulfield@cam.org.au

ABN: 70548 570 366

Homily at Mass 3rd Sunday of Lent, Year C – 24 March 2019

In the shadow of Mt Horeb, also known as Mt Sinai, Moses discovers a burning bush. And from the heart of the fire, he hears a voice – the voice of God. The story is familiar to all of us. We can see the bush and its flame – we can share Moses’ puzzlement: that despite the flames, the bush does not break down, but rather burns like the Australian bush and great gum trees during our regular summer bush fires – hot, radiant, bright. This event however inspires not fear but rather great reverence. Moses finds himself on holy ground, he must take off his sandals, cover his face, bow down before the mysterious God who reveals his voice and his holy name, “I am the God of your ancestors”, the voice proclaims, “I am who I am”: the Lord God, the Creator, the Father of Israel, the Eternal God.

The story of Moses and the burning bush is one of the most significant stories from the Old Testament. It points to so many stories in the Gospel where the apostles fall down before Jesus, where the sick, lepers and desperate parents seek Jesus out and throw themselves before him, crying out “save me”, “help me”, “have mercy on me”. From all these stories we learn who God is and how we relate to him.

God reveals himself to Moses by word and by name. The burning bush draws Moses, he is fascinated by it, it seems to pull him like a magnet. In this God reveals his mystery. For us a mystery is not something about which we know nothing, but rather something about which we do not know everything. God’s voice: what does that sound like? God’s name, “I am who I am”: What exactly does that mean? God is reality. God is existence, God is Being. But we also sing today in the psalm: “God is kind, God is merciful”.

In our personal prayer you and I have our own way of addressing God, our own way of knowing him. For some it will be ‘Father’, for others it will be a special devotion that we learnt from our parents or picked up along the way: “Sacred Heart” “Divine Mercy”. In our own prayer the voice of God may not make a sound but we can sometimes feel his presence, his warmth, perhaps even a soft whisper. Our time at Mass, a quiet time, the Rosary will always leave us feeling refreshed and uplifted. Prayer is always God – time, time well spent, time never wasted.

On New Year's Day, the Church sings this antiphon:

“Moses saw the thornbush which was on fire yet was not burnt up
in it we see a sign of your virginity which all must honour;
Mother of God, pray for us”

Tomorrow is the feast of the Annunciation – when with her “Yes” to the Angel Mary placed her whole self – including her virginity – into the hand of God. With her “yes” Mary conceived the Son of God in her womb: she began to be the Mother of God. The mystery is that Mary is ever virgin. St Augustine famously expressed it this way:

Mary remained a virgin in conceiving her son,
a virgin in giving birth to him,
a virgin in carrying him,
a virgin in nursing him at her breast,
always a virgin (CCC n510)

Before this great mystery of God beginning his life among us in the womb of Mary we bow down in awe and wonder.

Before Mary's son who is God-with-us in the Eucharist we celebrate and receive today we fall down, our knees bent, our head bowed, in reverence, humility, faith.