

Sunday Thought

30th August 2020 22nd in Ordinary Time

Readings

Exodus 3: 1 - 15

Psalm 105: 1-6.23-26, 45c

Romans 12: 9 - 21

Matthew 16: 21 – 128

Me? I couldn't do that!



The story of Moses and the burning bush always brings back to me a young memory of standing in front of a patient cinema usher, shining her torch along a vacant row. It was in the days when timing was not so important. The show was continuous and we came and went as convenient to us. I think it all depended on how long it took to change the film reels. The Film was *The Ten Commandments*. I had arrived at the point when Moses came across a burning bush. For a moment, like him I stood rooted to the spot. It was my encounter too!

For Moses it was an ordinary day of shepherding in the sparse pasture around Mount Sinai. Not really the place to find a bush on fire without burning and an angel in the middle of it! Curiosity drew him closer. Close enough to hear a voice and have a conversation with God! The voice came out of the flames. Their conversation went something like this:

Moses! I know that's your name. I know you personally. I know all about you. About your past and present experiences.

Yes! I'm Moses. That's me.

Moses put down his staff and bag to step closer. The voice called urgently.

That's close enough. Get your shoes off. You're on holy ground!

When shoes were off and Moses on his knees, the voice continued. *Moses, I have a job I want you to do for me. All your life I have been preparing you for this moment. I want you to talk to the Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. I want you to negotiate the freedom of*

the Israelite people. You are going to bring them out of their slavery. You will lead them to a new life in their own land.

Moses took a while to absorb this unbelievable message. It was the thing he and his people had prayed about for as long as they could remember. His mind was blown full of spinning thoughts, and one above all others.....

Me? I couldn't do that. Me? You must know how things are with me. You know how I've had to run away from all that. And in any case, how can I be sure. Who are you? I don't even know your name to tell them who sent me! You know my name but who are you?

I AM That's my name.

What Moses had feared was true. His forehead was on the same level as his knees now.

I AM I am the eternal one. The creator of all things. The source of all knowledge, truth, authority, LOVE. I am the beginning and the end of everything.

(Many centuries later other people would hear him say more - *My name is I AM, but you can call me Jesus!*)

In the years between then and now Moses and so many others would have similar experiences and give the same reply '*Me? I couldn't do that!*' and it has taken an angel in a burning bush - something unusual in the everyday – for us to hear God's reply. '*I know that's how it seems to you now, but I promise you. If I call, you can.*'

Maybe recent changed lifestyles and periods of isolation have been our *time in the desert*. I hope there have been instances of *God-moments* in everyday life. We may have glimpsed eternity in the first ray of sunlight through our curtains or seen an angel in the candleflame we lit when the power went off. Maybe God was there with a very ordinary angel who knocked on the door to ask how you were and if you needed anything. And out of those moments we may have heard God saying, *Things are about to be different in Church and in your personal Christian life. There's a little job I'd like you to do for me.*'

'If I call, you can.'