

### Third Sunday of Lent

In a large city, a priest parked his car in a no-parking zone because he couldn't find a metered space. He put a note under the windshield wiper that read: "I have circled the block 100 times. If I don't park here, I'll miss my appointment. Forgive us our trespasses." When he returned, he found a citation from a police officer along with this note: "I've circled this block for 10 years. If I don't give you a ticket, I'll lose my job. Lead us not into temptation."

Dear Friends,

During lent, we reflect about how we can deepen our relationship with God in our daily life. The first week, we reflected to be grateful to God as the people of Israel, which leads us to be transformed into his relationship. We read God's blessing to Abraham in the second week.

This week we reflect about God's mercy and compassion, and it calls us to his mission. The liturgy today teaches us to repent ourselves to do God's mission in our daily lives.

In the first reading, God calls to Moses in the burning Bush. We all heard what happened. When we look at the past of Moses, he wanted to go to Egypt because he was raised there; but he ran from Egypt to avoid punishment after he killed an Egyptian who was abusing a slave. So, he escaped from Egypt and gave excuses. God called him to do an important mission. It was a beautiful conversation between God and Moses, and their concerns for the people of Israel.

When Moses was given a big task, we see his frailty. So, he tried to give excuses. The first one is in Exodus 4: 1-9, where he expresses his fear that the people will not believe in him. It continues further in Exodus 4:10-17, when Moses says that he is not an eloquent speaker and that someone else should be sent in his place. God made him go with the company of Aaron.

There is evidence in other places in the scripture where when God calls people, they all try to give excuses. Ex. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and other prophets. When God Calls us to do something, we can not escape and give excuses all the time.

In the second reading, St Paul talks of the examples of Israelites, and warns us not to fall into evil things. He explains the whole point of Exodus in a nutshell, when he asks us to take care. Sometimes our self-esteem hinders us to be in a good relationship with God. Honesty and humility are the first and most necessary of all virtues.

In the Gospel, Jesus warns the people not to compare and give excuses and calls for repentance. There was no particular additional evidence about these incidents. But traditionally, Galileans were looked on as bad. So, there was a traditional thinking that bad things happened to bad people. Jesus clearly tells them that things don't happen that way. He is not trying to explain suffering here. But, he is telling us not to be complacent, which we sometimes are, and think, "Well, if nothing bad is happening to me, it must be because I am so good". Jesus asks us to be a better person than we are every day. We need to walk the path of conversion.

I personally want us to think about our excuses and escapes when God calls us to do something for him.

As committed Catholics, it has been a challenge for us to do some ministry in the church or bring somebody to church. That is also a kind of excuse and escape from God's Call. God will never leave us. We cannot escape from God. Let us pray and ask God's grace for conversion.