

The 3rd Sunday of Lent March 24, 2019

Wow what a great selection of readings for this weekend
How wonderfully complimentary to our current study WooooooW
What a blessing ! The beautiful 1st Reading from Exodus –The Burning Bush not being consumed and God speaking to Moses from there. Fire is such a rich symbol of purification, and yet such a terrorizing thing when out of control.

What is your name, Moses asks. How important is name in our society ???
What is your personal name for God? What is God's personal name for you ?? Look Beyond remember, we talked about it last week. The importance of looking beyondwhat I seewhat I hear..... and what is told to me. Put it in your pocket no, better yet, put it in your CONSCIOUSNESSyour AWARENESS Look Beyond Choose a Bigger Screen. Now, we can see some action. Now, something may be happening ! This my friends is where it is AT !

Let me begin by complimenting 'The Women's Guild' Wow ! It is Breath-Taking thank you very much that is one of the nicest and most wonderful things I have seen happen in my 42 years as a priest. You chose to have a Retreat Day for your sisters in order to enrich them in Faith in Relationship with each other, and Relationship with God that is one of the most beautiful things I have personally seen in my 42 years as a priest, and I would like to celebrate it now, and celebrate it again in the coming week, and the weeks beyond that, throughout this whole Lenten and Easter Season.

I INTENTIONALLY did not speak about it as it was coming into being. I say intentionally because I wanted it to become what it was today, and in my opinion, that was the Lord's plan for your beginning. Your sisters came because they wanted to, not because they were forced to, or pressured to in any way. You did all of the detailed preparation yourselves, you didn't ask somebody to come in and do it for you, though you included a woman, who was not Catholic, who had a wonderful testimony to share with you.....great EvangelizationYou courageously, under the guidance of His Holy Spirit, planned, prepared, and executed this experience for yourselves and for your sisters. You chose real important material being healthy in Mind, Body, and Soul. Wow ! That is all I can say ! I am deeply touched by your commitment, your Ministry, and your Service to each other

! Now that is Church in the Modern World I am not saying it is the only thing but it is the Main thingfeeding ourselves that we may feed other..... with the REAL Food.

Steven Covey, that great teacher, speaking of organizations and communities, said : “The main thing is, to keep the main thing, as the main thing.” I tip my hat to you all.... and say you have done that You had 50-55 sisters, or so. What can that not be double the next time?If it is the Main Thing, then there is no reason why it won't be so the next occasion. Why not ? Is there any reason Why not ? This is the experience of Church that He brought about in His sojourn in our world. Perhaps us Men can take a page out of you ledger. Yes ?

The Gospel story today, on a surface level seems very simple and straight forward I would dare to say it is anything but that. The first piece, ‘some were telling Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.’ WOW! Don't you hate that just like we do ? What do you think of them APPLES, Jesus ? Aren't you shocked just like us ????? Gossip ???? What you think ????? Was it Gossip ? Was it Pride ? Was it Envy ? Was it Anger ? What was it in your opinion ? Please reflect on it during the course of the week ? Jesus just moved right through it without a specific response.

The Gospel is a tell-tale piece about the culture of the time. The Pharisees had no time for sinners. They believed that they should be just written off ! Wow ...how much we have improved in 2000 years ????? Jesus didn't agree with them, and had no trouble setting a stake in the ground. He told them a story. The parable was a powerful tool in the Ministry of Jesus. He told the people a story, and instead of answering their prejudiced question, He invited them to enter into this story with Him, and then reach their own conclusions !

A vineyardan orchard is a very special place, normally reserved for vines or fruit and nut trees of various kinds, but Jesus, in His parable, talks of a fig tree which was planted in the Vineyard / Orchard. This was a very unusual phenomenon ! Soil was scarce and trees were planted everywhere good soil could be located. We are dealing here with a tree planted in very privileged soil.

In the normal course of events, it takes a fig tree three years to come to maturity. If by that time it is not bearing fruit, it is likely it will not bear fruit at

all. Such was the case. So, what does one do ????? ‘Give it one more year, please Sir,’ the gardener pleaded. What a generous Soul. I will work with it. I am good at my work. I will do what it takes.

This is a hugely practical concern for all of us. WE were created to bear fruit in the vineyard of the LordHow are you doing ? What fruit are you showing ?? Do you need another year Is that sufficient ? Will it take longer ? Why should it take longer ?

I would like for you to see how wonderfully this blends in with our current study Respectable Sins Confronting the Sins We Tolerate.
Ungodliness Unthankfulness Anxiety Frustration Discontentment
Pride Selfishness Impatience Irritability Anger Judgmentalism
Sins of the Tongue Just some of them....

I want you to just imagine — if some of these sins are significant in my life, should I be just set aside like the tree that is not bearing fruit ????? It is as I have said many times — best to see these Sins on a continuum, being in the 20% may not be bad at all, but up here on the 70/80% can be very dangerous. If I am doing nothing to alter my behavior, whether it is Anger, Resentment, Impatience, Gossip, what do I expect ? I could be headed for 100% where I am no longer open to input from others, or from God. I cut off all communication, and just rely on my own (maybe misguided) agenda. Then, I begin to think like the Pharisees cut them off ! Why not ??? Weren't lepers ostracizedcast away ??? The Pharisees were certainly open to casting sinners aside. What about YOU? What about Me ???

I can cut others down very directly (saw/ hammer/axe) or I can be much more subtlejust use my tongue to accomplish the same task !
Do I cut others downsins of the tongue or, do I give them another chance ?? That's the real stickler of the Gospel !!! Where do I stand in this parable which I enter into with my Lord and Savior ? I don't just read the parable from a distance. I enter into it. I become a player in this story He has given me. I find myself in there because He has invited me. I don't just see it as something that was told 2,000 years ago.....it is a today story where my God speaks to me in the depths of my heart where my relationship with Him exists !!!

— Fr. Gerry Hurley