

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Third Sunday of Lent • Year C • March 23, 2025



*O God,
crowned
with kindness
and compassion,
you do not deal with us
according to our sins
as we deserve
but according to
your infinite
mercy and graciousness,
for which we praise
and bless you.
Amen.*

Sunday Word

Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15

Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8, 11

1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12

Luke 13:1-9

Attracted to Mystery

Moses cannot resist the beautiful and wondrous burning bush. It is on fire, but it is not being consumed. God speaks to Moses from the midst of the burning bush. Moses is attracted to mystery, and the divine mystery, in turn, calls forth from him a new purpose in life. Moses will be sent by God to rescue the people mired in slavery.

Warned

Saint Paul advises us to consider what happened to Israel once they were rescued from slavery by God. They grumbled against God. They reaped what they sowed. Their chastisement stands as a lesson for all who would forget the saving love and power of God.

An Opportunity for Repentance

Jesus reminds the people that it is not only the past that holds lessons for us about our relationship to God. Lessons are plentiful if we look to our own time and day. Our lifespan is short. Knowing this, we are called to repent and to take every opportunity to grow in God's grace, turning our lives around so that we might go where the Lord leads.

Church Teaching: The Nature of God Revealed in His Mercy

Salvation History

Like our forebears in faith—the Jewish people—we believe that something of God has been revealed to us through his actions in history as chronicled in the pages of Sacred Scripture. For example, God discloses the divine name to Moses, saying “I am who am” (Exodus 3:14). This is not exactly a name. And yet, how does one identify utter Mystery? This disclosure raises more questions than it answers. Similarly, a burning bush does not burn up. This is the phenomenon that attracts Moses. He wants a closer look. He wants to understand. This thirst for

understanding becomes the basis for the first steps in Moses' relationship with the God, who reveals himself to his servant.

The Lord, faithful to the promises he made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is also faithful to their descendents. He will bring the people out of slavery in Egypt. As Moses later finds out, this people will stray from God, worshiping idols. Yet the Lord restores his people from the calamity of sin into which they have fallen.

In Jesus we find the full Revelation of God, who is merciful and forgiving. The very name *Jesus* means "God saves." In delivering Israel from slavery and leading them into the Promised Land, God saved them, freeing them from the worst kind of slavery—that is, slavery to sin. All Salvation History points to and is summed up in Jesus, the Savior. He himself epitomizes divine mercy and kindness.

The Parable of God

The scriptural parable for this Sunday illustrates the patience that God extends to us due to his kindness and mercy. Jesus has been described as the parable of God among us. His teaching and preaching, his healing miracles, his life, suffering, Death and Resurrection—in short, Jesus' entire life, mission, and ministry—are a living parable that powerfully points us in the direction of the everlasting mercy and kindness of God. The Lord always stands ready to forgive the repentant sinner.

Through Christ the human family is bound more closely to God, who desires our Salvation. Our attraction to the divine Mystery is fueled not by a burning bush but by the loving countenance of the Lord Jesus.

Distinctiveness of Church Teaching

This week many communities begin celebrating the Scrutinies for the Elect—those preparing for Baptism. These rituals proclaim the healing of God in Christ so that the Elect might be strengthened in their spiritual journey. God is revealed in the history of humanity and in Christ himself to be merciful and kind. The Church, acting in concert with and in fidelity to the divine nature, prays for the Elect, calling upon the infinite loving goodness of our all-powerful and yet exceedingly tender God.

Key Terms

SALVATION HISTORY

Historical record found in Sacred Scripture that chronicles God's blessings, interventions, and actions on our behalf. This chronicle achieves its high point in the saving event of Jesus Christ (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1080).

PARABLE

Derives from the Greek term *parabole*, meaning "to place things side by side," such as in a comparison. The parables of Jesus are short stories that use images from everyday life and point to a deeper meaning about God or the Kingdom of God. They confront the recipient into rethinking faith. In this regard, Jesus himself could be described as the parable of God among us (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 546).

REVELATION

Communication by God of himself to us. Through it he makes known the mystery of the divine plan, realized by his words and deeds over time, most fully communicated in Jesus Christ (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 50).

Voices of Faith

There is no doctrine which could be better, more precious and more splendid than the text of the Gospel. Behold and retain what our Lord and Master, Christ, has taught by his words and accomplished by his deeds.

—Saint Caesaria the Younger

Love must not simply abide by earthly laws but must let itself be illuminated by the truth which is God and must be expressed in that superior measure of justice which is mercy.

—Pope Benedict XVI

Further Reading

***Catechism of the Catholic Church*:** 53 (Revelation of God comes to humanity in stages), 64 (God forms his people in the hope of Salvation)

***United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*:**

Chapter 2 (God Comes to Meet Us), especially the section entitled "God Reveals His Loving Plan to Save Us," pages 12–15

***Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church*:**

1 (God's plan of Salvation for us), 8 (stages of Revelation), 9 (fullness of Revelation in Christ)