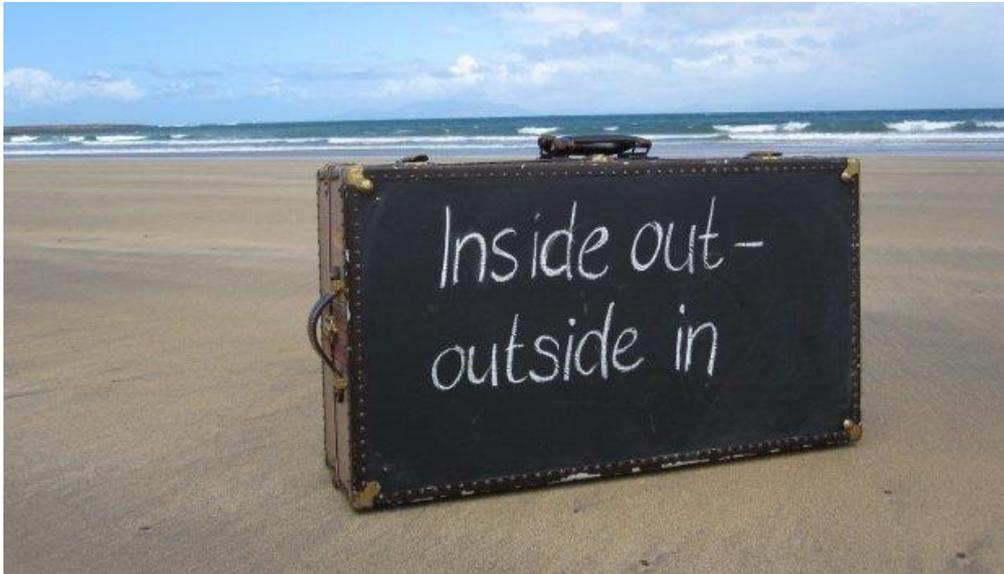




## THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST SUNDAY, AUGUST 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2020

### Inside-Out, Outside-In



**The suit-case invites us to think about our journey, connecting with the ideas that Tay will present in the homily**

Today we continue in the second instalment of the readings from Exodus. Last week Moses was born, this week he is chosen by Yahweh to lead his people out of Egypt, out of oppression. The Gospel reading is about Jesus' predicting his death, but in doing so raising fundamental questions over the usual way human beings see the world and themselves in it. Each reading is connected to the other, although it may not see that way initially. Each, Exodus and Matthew, shares through the common desire to turn the world on its head. For Exodus, this turning, is read through a political lens. For Matthew, this turning is read through an existential lens.

Let us use this space here, to reflect in particular upon Exodus, the liberation of the Hebrew slaves (*apiru*) from oppression. In this connection, the pioneer African American theologian James H. Cone is right when he maintains that "the liberation of the oppressed is a part of the innermost nature of God. Liberation is not an afterthought, but the essence of divine activity" (Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 67). In other words, the liberation of oppressed peoples is not just an addendum, nor is it an arbitrary act of God. It is a central aspect of the doctrine of election – God's election to be humanity's covenant partner. Exodus is telling us that God eternally wills to be the God who *preferentially opts for the poor* in willing to be God for all.

The Gospel is saying something similar but in a different. Matthew's Gospel constantly refers to the "little ones" (*mikroi*). These are those in the congregation and beyond who on the face of it don't matter, those of little importance or consequence. The challenge that Jesus makes to Peter, concerning "bearing the cross" is not about suffering for sufferings' sake. If that were the case, Christianity would be no more than a license for masochism. The point of opening Peter's eyes to the idea of suffering, is so that he may genuinely see the suffering of others, the suffering of the little ones in the world. Jesus calls Peter to an existential change in the way he thinks and sees. We can then conclude, on the basis of our readings, that any Christianity that seeks to interpret the world through the lens of power and the powerful, has lost its way, and certainly has lost Jesus.

## GATHERING

**We Prepare Ourselves:** Holy Spirit come to us (Taizé)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zasyz-tJkOg&list=RDSsWgvtQ5dgs&index=2>

### Welcome

In the name of God,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

The Lord be with you

**And also with you**

### Lighting the Paschal Candle

**Hymn/Song:** Holy Holy Holy (Sung by Audrey Assad, Nicea,  
Reginaled Heber) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgHrNNM23p8>

### Opening Prayers

This prayer arises from the Gospel reading for today: Matthew

In Jerusalem  
those ruled by fear are waiting;  
they will deal with him.

Knowing what's in store  
does not deter him. He goes  
to confront his foes.

To his friends he talks  
of his suffering and death.  
They try to stop him.

Do not talk like that,  
says Peter. It must not be!  
He does not get it.

Suffering and death:  
these may not be avoided  
if you're serving God.

The cross. Splintered wood  
for Jesus; what might it mean  
for you and for me?

Follow me, deny  
yourselves and take up your cross;  
you will find true life.

**Peace: We share the peace with each other from our homes.** (This week the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle continues to invites us to pray for the peoples of West Africa – Benin, Côte de Ivoire (Ivory Coast) and Togo. Below is a prayer for forgiveness, which we can use ourselves, s we think upon these communities.

Voice 1: O God, most mighty among the heavens, forgive our sins. **Amen.**

Voice 2: For private and secret sins, O God, forgive us. **Amen.**

V1: For not walking uprightly, O God, forgive us. **Amen.**

V2: Forgive our young people. **Amen.**

V1: Forgive our adults. **Amen.**

V2: Forgive our men. **Amen.**

V1: Forgive our women. **Amen.**

V2: Visit not the sins of our fathers on us. **Amen.**

V1: If you should visit their iniquities on us who worship you, we shall be hurt. **Amen.**

V2: Therefore blot out all their sins this day, O Lord. **Amen.**

V1: Forgive us individually. **Amen.**

V2: Forgive us corporately. **Amen.**

V1: Grant forgiveness to all who worship you and do your will on earth.

**Amen.**

(Pastor Franck Mawuli Adubra, Togo. *Prières pour le monde 2004* © Fédération protestante de France, Paris, France. English transl. Terry MacArthur, © 2005 WCC)

## LET'S HEAR THE WORD

### Some Thoughts about the Bible and Liberation

The very basis of the Bible's opposition movement to the usual social arrangements in the world is grounded in the fundamental idea of covenant, the new order of existence in the Lord and established in

the Law of Moses, which is against slavery, exploitation and alienation. The starting point for the ten commandments in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, is given in the words, 'I am the Lord your God who called you out of the land of Egypt. In the New Testament, this covenant was expressly accepted as a starting point in the ministry of Jesus. The hallmark of the covenant was 'righteousness'

**Conrad Boerma, Rich Man, Poor Man**

One major deficiency in the interpretation of the Exodus Event in the history of theological interpretation, is a completely spiritualized and depoliticized understanding of God's liberation of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Such interpretation strips the Exodus Event empty of its political content and significance, offering only an excessively spiritualized way of seeing things, disconnected from the material and historical picture. Surely there is a spiritual aspect, dimension to the Exodus Event, but it is always connected to the material, real events that take place. **R.C Jongte, Princeton Theological Seminary**

### **Exodus 3:1-15, Moses Facing Up to Pharaoh**

This is one of the major passages in the Book of Exodus. Moses has grown up in Pharaoh's house, but after killing an Egyptian for beating one of the Hebrews he fled the land (Exod 2:11-15). He has settled in the land of Midian and married Zipporah. A long time has passed, The Pharaoh who sought his life has died, and the conditions of Israel's slavery have become even more oppressive. But God 'looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them' (2:15). That short verse, that look of God, makes all the difference and sets the course for the story to come. As the story opens we find Moses going about his regular shepherding duties for his father-in-law (v. 1). There is little hint that all of life is about to change for him. He comes to a mountain. He, apparently, is blissfully ignorant of the significance of this mountain, but we are told it is Mt. Horeb, a name readers know well – 'the mountain of God'. The angel of the Lord (another way of saying the Lord himself) appears in a burning bush, but again Moses seems not to understand and approaches to satisfy his curiosity (v. 3). There is an interesting mixture of an innocent lack of awareness on Moses' part and the power of the divine presence. The contrast is made all the sharper when God speaks out of the bush. There is danger in this place; it is holy ground. Even God's self-introduction to Moses (v. 6) is somewhat overwhelming compared to the simple 'here I am' from Moses.

This seemingly chance meeting introduces what is essentially a 'commissioning narrative' for Moses, in which God sends him to free the Israelites from their slavery, a task that turns out to be a life-long vocation. The story takes the shape of similar accounts: there is a charge to complete a task (vv. 7-10): some reticence shown by

Moses (v. 11); assurance by God (v. 12a); and a sign to confirm the authenticity of the commission (v. 12b). Other similar episodes include Judg 6:11-18 and Jer 1:4-10. The general shape of such accounts makes it clear that the call or commission comes from God and despite any human weakness, reticence or incapacity, the divine presence and support is sufficient for the task. Moses turns out to be good at raising potential difficulties, for he lists a whole string of them from 3:13-4:17, some to do with who God is, some to do with his own deficiencies.

**3** Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup> There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. <sup>3</sup> So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”

<sup>4</sup> When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!”

And Moses said, “Here I am.”

<sup>5</sup> “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” <sup>6</sup> Then he said, “I am the God of your father,<sup>[a]</sup> the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. <sup>8</sup> So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. <sup>9</sup> And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. <sup>10</sup> So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”

<sup>11</sup> But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

<sup>12</sup> And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you<sup>[b]</sup> will worship God on this mountain.”

<sup>13</sup> Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”

<sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.<sup>[c]</sup> This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

<sup>15</sup> God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD,<sup>[d]</sup> the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’

“This is my name forever,  
the name you shall call me  
from generation to generation.

The word of the Lord

***Thanks be to God***

## **Psalm 105 –1-11, 45b, Remembering that God honours his people**

After a general introduction calling people to give thanks to the Lord (vv. 1-4) they are then called on to ‘remember’ (v. 5). This is one of the major themes of the psalm. Memory and remembrance are the key to this recounting of Israel’s early history. But it is memory with a purpose, and the memory that the psalmist recounts is tailored to that purpose.

The central themes of Psalm 105 are set out in vv. 7-11. They have to do with the faithfulness of God. The Lord is described as sovereign over all the earth (v. 7). The everlasting nature of the covenant the Lord made with Abraham is stressed (vv. 8-10), and the gift of the land of Canaan as Israel’s ‘portion for an inheritance’ is the focus in v. 11. Frequent repetition of significant words throughout the psalm such as ‘land(s)’ (10 times), ‘covenant’ and its synonyms (e.g. ‘word’, ‘promise’) (8 times) and of the names of the patriarchs (8 times), underlines these themes. In setting them out the psalmist stresses the Lord’s remembrance of the covenant in v. 8 (Hebrew: ‘he remembered’; NRSV: ‘he is mindful’) and v. 42. The Lord’s memory governs all that is recounted in the psalm, and by implication, everything involved in the ongoing relationship between the Lord and the people

The wisdom to be gained from this recital is that the Lord provides for the people even in the most difficult times. They will prosper with the Lord even in captivity (v. 24) when their oppressors have the upper hand.

- <sup>1</sup> Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name;  
make known among the nations what he has done.
- <sup>2</sup> ***Sing to him, sing praise to him;  
tell of all his wonderful acts.***
- <sup>3</sup> Glory in his holy name;  
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.
- <sup>4</sup> ***Look to the LORD and his strength;  
seek his face always.***
- <sup>5</sup> Remember the wonders he has done,  
his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,
- <sup>6</sup> ***you his servants, the descendants of Abraham,  
his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.***
- <sup>7</sup> He is the LORD our God;  
his judgments are in all the earth.
- <sup>8</sup> ***He remembers his covenant forever,  
the promise he made, for a thousand generations,***
- <sup>9</sup> the covenant he made with Abraham,  
the oath he swore to Isaac.
- <sup>10</sup> ***He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree,  
to Israel as an everlasting covenant:***
- <sup>11</sup> "To you I will give the land of Canaan  
as the portion you will inherit."
- <sup>45</sup> ***Praise the LORD***

## **Romans 12:9-21, living our lives through Jesus Christ**

Paul has just challenged the Roman Christians to see themselves as the body of Christ. Individuals are like members of that single body. Each member has a part to play. There is no room for rivalry and also no need for it, because our confidence rests not on making ourselves better than others but in believing the gospel: that God values each one of us. God's righteousness or goodness is the foundation of our faith and our being.

What does it look like when people live on that basis? In our passage we see something of the answer. It could easily have come straight from a Jewish teaching manual of the time. There is nothing particularly Christian about it. It represents the best values Paul has learned and now sees as needing to characterise the community of faith. Notice the focus on genuineness and the priority of love. That is no empty commitment. It includes recognising what is not love, namely evil and resisting its sway. The good we are to hold close to is defined by love, not by a set of rules. It is not about not doing anything wrong, but about living from compassion.

<sup>9</sup>Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. <sup>11</sup> Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

<sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.<sup>[a]</sup> Do not be conceited.

<sup>17</sup> Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. <sup>19</sup> Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay,"<sup>[b]</sup> says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;  
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.  
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."<sup>[c]</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

### **Matthew 16:21-28, Jesus predicts his death and applies it to the idea of the way we must live.**

Jesus' announcement of his impending visit to Jerusalem, which will result in his suffering and then his resurrection (16:21), derives from Mark 8:31, where it forms the first of three such predictions which come in rapid succession. The other two are 9:31 and 10:33. Matthew also takes these up into his gospel, but more material intervenes so the effect is less dramatic. He refers to the prediction, then, a fourth time in 26:2. In Mark each of these predictions is set in contrast to failures on the part of the disciples to understand the path of suffering and, instead, to be preoccupied with their own power and status. In Matthew this is still there, at least with the first and the third, but it is less dominant in the context of the whole section of chapters 16-20.

The path of suffering set out in 16:21 is fundamental for Matthew. It is interesting that he has replaced 'Son of Man' (Mark 8:31) with the simple, 'I'. It is almost as though he has transferred it (by cut and paste!) up to 16:13! Jesus' suffering receives emphasis because it is part of his obedience and provides a model for faithfulness of the disciples and doubtless of Matthew's hearers who also face adversity. The focus is not his dying for their sins. This understanding of Jesus' death is also known to Matthew, but receives little emphasis.

The path of lowliness is an important commentary on the nature of the authority and leadership given to Peter and the church in the preceding verses. The bottom line is to be like Jesus in the exercise of leadership. He lived out what the beatitudes blessed. Matthew sharpens the focus on Peter in the verses which follow. In a play on Peter's name, Matthew adds that Peter has become a 'skandalon', a rock which trips people over. Peter has failed to understand Jesus' leadership and lowliness. He is espousing the common values of the time about power and worth and not espousing God's values.

16:24-26 now apply these insights to the way of discipleship. The call is not to lose self-identity and so abandon one's responsibility, but to abandon the agenda for living which pits self against the others.

<sup>21</sup> From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

<sup>22</sup> Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

<sup>23</sup> Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever wants to save their life<sup>[a]</sup> will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. <sup>26</sup> What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? <sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

<sup>28</sup> "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

The Gospel of the Lord  
***Praise to you Lord Christ***

(All the readings today have come from the Good News Translation)

**Hymn for Meditation:** Lord have mercy - Pie Jesu, (Notre Dame Folk Choir, Andrew Lloyd Weber)

**Some thoughts....**

**Let's Give: Our Offerings**

**Doxology**

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
praise him, all creatures here below,  
praise him above, ye heavenly host,  
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.***

**Prayer of Dedication**

**Prayers of the People**

At the end of each prayer/petition the one who prays offers the words; "Jesus, you ask us to live for life", and the response is "helps us to challenge the powers of death".

**Lord's Prayer**

***Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.***

***Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.***

***For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.***

하늘에 계신 우리 아버지여  
이름이 거룩히 여김을 받으시오며  
나라이 임하옵시며

뜻이 하늘에서 이룬 것 같이  
 땅에서도 이루어지이다.  
 오늘날 우리에게 일용할 양식을 주옵시고  
 우리가 우리에게  
 죄 지은 자를 사하여 준 것 같이  
 우리 죄를 사하여 주옵시고  
 우리를 시험에 들게 하지 마옵시고  
 다만 악에서 구하옵소서  
 대개 나라와 권세와 영광이  
 아버지께 영원히 있사옵나이다. 아멘

**Closing Hymn:** We are Called (Notre Dame University Folk Choir,  
 Indiana, USA, David Haas, St Louis Jesuits)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgomtlc1\\_yc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgomtlc1_yc)

Come! live in the light!  
 Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!  
 We are called to be light for the kingdom,  
 to live in the freedom of the city of God!

We are called to act with justice.  
 We are called to love tenderly.  
 We are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.

Come! Open your heart!  
 Show your mercy to all those in fear!  
 We are called to be hope for the hopeless,  
 so all hatred and blindness will be no more!

We are called to act with justice.  
 We are called to love tenderly.  
 We are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.

Sing! Sing a new song!  
 Sing of that great day when all will be one!  
 God will reign and we'll walk with each other as sisters and brothers  
 united in love!

We are called to act with justice.  
We are called to love tenderly.  
We are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.

Words and Music: David Hass

### **Blessing and Sending Out**

The blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit  
Be upon you and remain with you always

Our service has ended.  
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

***In the name of Christ***

**We Close:** Confitemini Domino, Our God is Able (Taizé)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsWgvtQ5dgs&list=RDSsWgvtQ5dgs&start\\_radio=1&t=210](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsWgvtQ5dgs&list=RDSsWgvtQ5dgs&start_radio=1&t=210)