

HOMILY THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT LUKE

1. Our God is a mystery
 - a. mystery is not a problem to be solved, scientifically and mathematically
 - i. Analyze idea , take it apart, then we will understand
 - ii. Reality is that science only gives us a partial view of reality
 - b. Think of Grand Canyon
 - i. know from science that created by thousands of years of erosion
 - ii. simply reduces it to facts but it misses point of experience of Grand Canyon
 - iii. Feeling of awe and wonder that cannot be analyzed
2. Never can truly understand God
 - a. Even his name YAHWEH is mysterious
 - i. I am who am, or I will be who I will be
 - ii. God saying he has an existence and life deeper than anything we understand
 - iii. We are alive now but it can be taken away at any time
 - iv. God is life itself, source of everything, be nothing without him
 1. even meaning of nothing is beyond us
 2. closest image we have is darkness, but even darkness has a sense of substance
3. One of the things that seems hardest to comprehend about God is problem of evil
 - a. If God truly is a loving and all-powerful God, how can he permit evil
 - i. Temptation is to analyze and blame, those who experience suffering must be great sinners
 - b. Jesus challenges this notion head on in the gospel
 - i. He gives example of group of Galileans apparently massacred by Pontius Pilate as they were offering a sacrifice – Pilate mingled their blood with sacrifice
 1. People saying they must have gravely sinned if God allowed them such suffering
 2. Jesus response they are no more guilty than any of us, indeed we could be at risk of similar suffering
 - ii. Another example – 18 killed in Siloam by tower falling down, no more guilty than anybody else in Jerusalem
4. Reality is we are like barren fig tree, none of us is really willing to truly bear abundant fruit
 - a. Constantly make compromises – who of us willing to live as simply as Mother Teresa or Francis of Assisi (even they readily acknowledge themselves as sinners deserving punishment)
 - b. Who of us has courage to speak out publicly and regularly on behalf of poor and vulnerable like Dorothy Day or even take seriously the words of St. John Chrysostom
 - i. who in his preaching told his people if you have an extra pair of shoes and your neighbor has none, you have stolen those shoes from your neighbor
 - c. Jesus warning us against blaming others for their suffering or misfortune
 - i. Blaming is kind of defense mechanism
 - ii. If they caused their own suffering, then it is their problem not mine
 - iii. If it is not their fault, then perhaps we may have some obligations toward them
5. Despite our weaknesses, we rejoice in Mystery of a God who does not give up on us
 - a. God is the gardener who says do not cut the fig tree down even though it is wasting space
 - b. God is willing to prune us, to help us to change and begin to bear fruit
 - c. If we are being oppressed by another, we can call out to him and trust in love
 - d. If we trust God, in his own mysterious way he will free us from our slavery,
 - i. enslavement by other people or more likely addictions and bad habits in our lives
6. How and why God would care so much for us to constantly overlook our pettiness and sinfulness to love us and keep giving us new chances is a mystery beyond our understanding
 - a. It is a mystery that we can rejoice in and be awe-inspired even more than we are inspired by sights such as the Grand Canyon