

Lenten Reflection

Thursday, Fourth Week of Lent March 30, 2017



By Associate Pat Montgomery

In today's reading from Exodus, the Lord, speaking to Moses, denounces the errant Israelites who, in Moses' absence from them, cast a molten calf. Are they not like people all through the ages, especially today's iPhone users and YouTube viewers and Skype callers, who hanker after photos and images to remind them of absent dear ones? As children, most of us glommed on to the kindly gray-haired, gray-bearded patriarch image of the Almighty, and of Jesus as a blond-haired, blue-eyed handsome Caucasian. We held these unrealistic mind pictures well into adulthood, as much in need of immediate vestiges as those desert wanderers were.

In the Gospel reading, it is Christ who denounces his opponents for their inability to see what was right in front of them: the Son of God sent by the Father. He takes Jewish laws and his adversaries' lack of faith to strict account, for their salvation's sake.

"You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent," he chastised. (John 5: 37-38)

I am reminded now of a friend, Lucia, 90 years of age. She has been a dynamic teacher, an accomplished violin player, and a deeply spiritual woman throughout her life. The walls of her home hold many photographs of her family as it began and grew: her husband, four children, 12 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren. A few years ago, she began to show signs of severe memory loss. Today, Lu cannot remember a single name to match a face in the photos, yet she still plays violin sonatas by heart.

Her daughter, Addie, hugs her shoulders and says, "Mom lives in the NOW. Isn't that the way we are all supposed to live?"

Like those Old Testament people, you and I have never seen God. We have never heard God's voice. But, like Lu, we have his words written on our hearts, and we can put away distractions to focus on them now, this Lenten season.

