

WORD FROM THE PASTOR

WORKING WITHOUT GETTING DISCOURAGED



I wondered, as you probably do, why today's liturgy presents us with the famous and seminal episode of the Burning Bush, which cast an incomparable light on the entire story of Moses, alongside three scenes from everyday life in Jesus' time: **two accidents and a winegrower caught in a difficult situation with a dying tree.** Remember that we are still in Lent on the Easter journey with Jesus, I understand that these texts support our efforts at conversion by giving us the right time and the impetus to continue our path without becoming discouraged.

The first reading tells us of a famous episode in the life of Moses: that of the Burning Bush, as it is commonly called. Moses' experience is unexpected. The visit of the Angel of the Lord allows him to stop and discover the presence of God Himself in this Bush that does not burn, a presence where God reveals Himself in His mystery: **"Yahweh," which in English means "I am Who am."** But how will he succeed? By drawing on his experience of the Burning Bush, which is that of a fire that never goes out. In the heart of Moses, a flame of love was lit that burns without being consumed. Our time of Lent is a time of walking in the desert, like that of the Hebrew people. Let us not allow discouragement and weariness take over. On the contrary, let the example of Moses inspire us. Let us return to that fire that burned our hearts one day, as it did for Moses. Complaints, as Saint Paul tells the Christians of Corinth in the second reading, lead us away from God. Let us allow God's Grace do his transforming work in us, for His power is at work today as yesterday.

However, we must always remember that, while God's Power and Grace can do all things, God does not want to save us without us. It is up to us to apply what the winegrower says to his master in the Gospel: "Dig, dig without tiring." Saint Ignatius of Loyola said that, in the Christian life, we must act as if everything depends on us, knowing that everything depends on God. If we are sincere in our efforts toward conversion during Lent, we will take advantage of this time to engage in a spiritual training and experience through greater fidelity in prayer, sharing, and fasting in various forms. This is the goal of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy that Pope Francis continually proposes to us this Lent, at the heart of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. Digging does not lead to growth, but a tree that is not tended can become stunted to the point of death. This is how it is in our encounter with God. **If we are not striving for change, we become like a fig tree that withers and dies. "Faith without works is a Dead Faith," says the letter of the Apostle Saint James (James 2:26).**

This urgent invitation is not intended to force our hand, but rather to emphasize that **it is our freedom that is at stake.** No one can decide for us to open the door to God's visit, which will often come unexpectedly, as it did to Moses. May this Eucharist find us attentive, like Moses, to the words and inspirations that the Holy Spirit places in our hearts. Thus we will arrive at Easter with new hearts and new minds. This is the grace I wish for all of you. Amen!.

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Dean of Northwest Broward of the Archdiocese Miami – March 23, 2025***