

THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

LECTIONARY #164

READING I Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9

A reading from the Book of Exodus

Early in the morning **Moses** went up **Mount Sinai**
as the **LORD** had **commanded** him,
taking along the two stone **tablets**.

Having come down in a cloud, the **LORD** **stood** with Moses there
and proclaimed his name, "**LORD**."

Thus the Lord passed before him and cried out,
"The **LORD**, the **LORD**, a **merciful** and **gracious** **God**,
slow to anger and rich in **kindness** and **fidelity**."

Moses at **once** bowed down to the ground in worship.

Then he said, "If I find **favor** with you, O **LORD**,
do come along in our **company**."

This is indeed a stiff-necked people;
yet **pardon** our wickedness and sins,
and **receive us as your own**."

Exodus = EK-suh-duhs

Sinai = Sĭ-nĭ

Moses = MOH-zis

Proclaim with clarity and purpose.

Pause before you say "Lord."

Proclaim the Lords' words with a gentle tone.

Moses responds with humility. Let the
congregation hear that in your voice.

READING I

Woven through today's reading are themes of covenant, fidelity, and the desire to see God. In the opening verse we see Moses carrying a second set of stone tablets back up Mount Sinai. He smashed the first one, upon which God had inscribed the covenant, when he saw the Israelites worshipping the golden calf. Ironically, their worry that something happened to Moses led them to ask Aaron to "make us a god who will go before us." The second set of stone tablets portends the future of the divine-human relationship.

Its endurance would always depend not on human fidelity but on God's intense desire to live with humankind.

The next verses describe the Lord's response to Moses' request to see the divine glory. The Lord explained to Moses that he would only see the Lord's back. In other words, he would perceive only the identifying markers of God's presence and action in the world. These are solemnly proclaimed as the Lord passes by Moses: "The Lord is a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity."

Translations necessarily limit the richness of the Hebrew terms used to describe the Lord. "Merciful" entails empathy and means more literally "compassionate." The Hebrew word for it is associated with a pregnant woman's womb and thus also evokes the tender concern of a mother for her child. "Gracious" also means to show favor to someone. "Slow to anger" is the biblical phrase for patience and long-suffering.

Most difficult to translate adequately is the last phrase, *rab hesed w'emeth*. *Rab*

For meditation and context:

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55 (52b)

R. Glory and praise for ever!

Blessed are you, O Lord, the God
of our fathers,
praiseworthy and exalted above all forever;
and blessed is your holy and glorious name,
praiseworthy and exalted above all for
all ages.

Blessed are you on the throne
of your kingdom,
praiseworthy and exalted above all forever.

Blessed are you who look into the depths
from your throne upon the cherubim,
praiseworthy and exalted above all forever.

Blessed are you in the temple of your
holy glory,
praiseworthy and glorious above
all forever.

READING II 2 Corinthians 13:11–13

A reading from second Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters, rejoice.

Mend your ways,
encourage one another,
agree with one another, **live in peace,**
and the **God of love and peace will be with you.**

Greet one another with a **holy kiss.**

All the holy ones greet you.

The **grace of the Lord Jesus Christ**
and the **love of God**

and the **fellowship of the Holy Spirit** be with all of you.

Corinthians = kohr-IN-thee-uhnz

St. Paul is teaching us how to live as followers of Christ. Proclaim with high energy and excitement.

denotes abundance. *Hesed* conveys the continuous outpouring of divine kindness, goodness, or steadfast love. *Emeth* is derived from *amen* and denotes firmness, constancy, loyalty, and truth. The combination of these expresses something like the abounding, incomparable, and unconditional love that God continually pours out on Israel and on all creation. Is it any wonder that Moses begs such a covenant Lord to forgive the people's infidelity and accompany them personally on the journey to the Promised Land?

READING II In the closing of his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul addresses the fractured community as "brothers and sisters," reminding them that at Baptism they were reconciled to God and became siblings in the divine family. For these and the countless blessings they received in Christ, they are to rejoice. Paul uses the Greek present tense for this and the following exhortations, indicating that he expects not an isolated action but an ongoing response to them.

The exhortations summarize his earlier instructions to the Corinthian community. Basically, they need to be mending their ways or putting things in order so that their life conforms more closely to that of Christ. Paul's appeal that they agree with one another does not mean that they need to hold the same opinion on every topic, but that they should agree on matters that are vital to their functioning as the Body of Christ. Living together in peace, which works all things together for the good of all, is the issue that Paul singles out. He