

Wednesday of the 15th Week of Ordinary Time

Homily of Bishop John Barres

St. Agnes Cathedral

July 19, 2023

Both yesterday and today at Mass, we have been moving through the Book of Exodus and hearing about the emergence of the great Old Testament figure of Moses.

The great figures of the Old Testament like Abraham and Moses inspire us and prefigure for us the coming of Christ.

Yesterday at Mass, we heard the story in the Book of Exodus Chapter 2 of Pharaoh's daughter discovering a basket with a baby among the reeds in the river bank that contained Moses and how she drew Moses out of the river and adopted him as her son.

We heard the story of how Moses killed the Egyptian and fled to the land of Midian.

Today, we heard the memorable story of Moses on Mount Horeb encountering God's presence in the burning bush. The bush, though on fire, is not consumed.

The burning bush is both a sign of the awesome, unapproachable power and transcendence of God and the invitation to Moses, and to all of us, to a deep intimacy with God.

In our relationship with God, the Holy Trinity, awe and wonder, intimacy and closeness go together.

God tells Moses to remove his sandals for the place he is standing is "holy ground."

It is at this moment when Moses experiences both God's awesome power and his burning invitation to deep intimacy that God chooses Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

Moses realizes the transcendence of God. He realizes that despite his weaknesses and inadequacies, God will be with him to strengthen him, lead him and guide him.

Moses has a deep faith and accepts at every stage what God says to him and what God wants from him.

The relationship between God and Moses teaches us all many lessons about the relationship of God and ourselves.

Like his ancestor Abraham, Moses places his trust in God. He leaves the peace and security of his home in Midian and returns to Egypt with the special mission of leading his suffering people out of Egypt into Canaan.¹

We ask that, like Moses, we could adore the awesome transcendence of God and, at the same time, accept his deep and lasting invitation to intimacy.

¹Cf. I found a 12/1/92 article "The Book of Exodus" by Antonio Fernandez in *Catholic Answers* to be helpful reference in the preparation of this homily.