

Pentecost 15 - The Cost of Seeking and Finding Freedom

The Exodus story has several survival stories in the various narratives that comprise its description in the biblical text. Exodus 12:1-14 ushers in the tenth plague. This final plague strikes at the heart of Pharaoh. It costs Pharaoh his first-born and the first-born of the families of his people. It seems merciless to us, because the loss of a child is one of the deepest heart-wounds of humanity. The sign that saves the Hebrew children also involves the slaughter of many lambs, one for each Hebrew family. The sacrifice of the lambs provides the blood to mark the lintels and doorposts of Hebrew houses in Egypt. This would save their own first-born. But the first-born of the Egyptians would die. This tragedy temporarily weakens Pharaoh's resolve and he allows the Hebrews to leave Egypt. Later he will change his mind and pursue them.

We read and see the characters and events of this story through twenty-first century lenses. The Exodus has been scrutinised and analysed and the archaeological and literary evidence for it has been sifted through. But the stories of the plagues in Egypt are hard to verify in history. That is, history as we can discern it from events that took place more than 3,000 years ago. However, this narrative and the narrative sequence that follows became the basis of the Passover Story. The Exodus recital in later Jewish liturgies enshrined the Passover, that most poignant of Jewish recollections of their historical traditions, their roots as a nation, and their pilgrimage as a people. Details of history were subsumed in the vast scope and depth of the significance and meaning that the Exodus as a whole acquired for the Jewish people.

Passover comes to us full of resonances of the Last Supper and the Cross. There another Lamb is sacrificed, and the Cross becomes a sign of Salvation, not on lintels and doorposts, but for all of humanity. The sacrifice of a life brings life for all who can see it and take it into their very being and their world view. We do not possess all the details of what happened at the Cross, but we have more than we need to know that a cosmic event took place there that cannot be explained away. We believe that for all those who have ears to hear and eyes to see and faith to believe, it affects the salvation of humanity.

The Master Story of Judaism is the Exodus. The Master Story of Christianity is the Exodus of Christ from death on the Cross to Resurrection into the heart of God. They are both stories about pilgrimage. These master Stories will always intrigue us, inspire us, and provide lasting symbols of identity and destiny. Our own pilgrimage is a participation in the endless search for that which lasts, that which bathes us in a glorious sense of freedom, and that which makes love seem so worthwhile and our life enhanced with meaning.

Bishop Arthur Jones

=====

Next Sunday's readings:

Deuteronomy 4:32-40; Psalm 51; 1 John 3:18-24; John 14:15-21

THIS WEEK:

- Today. Confirmation Class after the 9:30 am service.
- Sept. 7, Tuesday. Bible Study, 10am.
- Sept. 10, Friday. **Non-working Holiday. Office closed.**

NEXT SUNDAY:

- Veteran's Sunday Service, 9:30am (Preacher: Bishop Dixie Taclobao).

Sunday School registration still going on. Forms are available at the church entrance.

Your prayers are asked in our healing ministry for Diana Croyston, JPeter, Beryl Tanner, Ron Thoburn, Suzanne Jacobson, Cena Quiapos, Benjie Gonzales, Ron Jacob, Bonnie SyCip, Fidelia Matthews, Jovel Llagas, Ema Duhaylongsod, Ted Whale, Loy Solasco, Emerinciana Gatela, Augusto Natividad, Avelina Collado, Amy Gonzales, Eric Williamson, Carlyn-Fern Manning, Richard Kendall, Johnny Manning Jr, Carrie Angus, Jaqueline Acquiatan, Janet Johnstone, Susan Dalmas, Sunny Cabanang, Gloria Domingo, Katsi Araneta, Valerie Jones.

	Last Sunday	Year-to-date	Proportionate Budget	2010 Budget
Pledge	P45,400.00	P2,658,258.48	P2,625,000.00	P3,900,000.00
Loose Plate	P14,670.00	P603,309.03	P632,692.31	P940,000.00

The church's monthly *Sources & Uses* report is available for viewing in the Church Office. Please look for Maricel. For questions, feel free to email Edison at edisonyap@gmail.com