

MAY 1, 2022

Throughout Lent, I was reading and praying over the Book of Exodus as part of my Lenten observances. Making my way through the book, it struck me that the journey of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land could provide a good schema for the next chapter of our journey as a new Family of Parishes and the Beacons of Light implementation programming.

Perhaps what struck me the most in Exodus, and then connecting throughout the rest of the Bible, are these key passages that mark significant turning points in the story of God's work to bring us to salvation. Some of these are key positive turns, such as St. John the Baptist proclaiming 'Behold the Lamb of God!' when he sees Jesus for the first time.

Other passages are seeming turns away from God's plan and bring about a detour that was still part of God's plan, even if it may not seem like it. Early in the Book of Exodus, the line appears, 'A new Pharaoh arose in Egypt who did not know Joseph.'

With that comment, the history of Israel takes a significant downturn as they start to slowly be enslaved by the Egyptians and get brought into a place where they cry out to God for deliverance and freedom.

It struck me in reading through Exodus that God allowed this situation so that He could bring His greater glory to pass in the events told throughout the rest of the Book of Exodus, if not also the rest of the Bible. God's permissive will, His allowance of evil in order to bring about a greater good, is on full display throughout this process.

This brings me to today, and the situation we find ourselves in not only here in the current Dayton Region XII and the new Family of Parishes we will soon be in, but also the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. It may seem that God has forgotten or abandoned us; we have seen not only a decline in the number of priests, but also a decline in overall giving, Mass attendance, and just a general sense of a decline in adherence to the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church. There are many, many reasons for this, beyond the scope of this column.

But, just like the ancient Israelites who felt abandoned and betrayed by God; He allowed it to happen so that His glory could shine. I am convinced that God can and will do so again, today, in this process! But the caution is that it was not easy for the Israelites, nor will it be easy for us.

Over the next eight weeks, I will be drawing the parallels that I see from Exodus to the situation we find ourselves in today. There will be challenges along the way, but as long as we keep the eye on the end of the journey, we will be ok because we will remember that God is with us, so we need nothing else.

In Christ,
Fr. Kyle Schnippel
Pastor