

Reflection Thursday Lent 4 – 2021

Whenever we face difficulty and turn to God, like the Hebrew's in the desert with Moses, we look for concrete signs. Thinking Moses had died, they built their own sign of God, a golden calf. They also developed a rationale for doing this. It is tempting to believe that Moses really did persuade God to have mercy on the people for their sin. If this were the case, then the rationale delivered by Jesus in John's gospel would also have been accepted by the Jews but it was not. It is far better to believe that the mercy and love of God for us and the whole of humanity can respond to the appeal of just one person. This is shown by Jesus who appealed for mercy for the whole of humanity, past, present, and future. His appeal was heard and accepted and Jesus gained mercy for us all.

We live always in the mercy of God. We would not even exist if not for the mercy of God. Moses teaches us that we have a duty to intercede and ask God's mercy not just for ourselves but for all the evils of this world. Acknowledging we live in God's mercy will change the way we see ourselves, others and how God is present in our lives, as this story reveals:

A king had a large orchard filled with a variety of fruit trees. He employed a skilled gardener to tend and care for his trees. The gardener would gather together the ripe and juicy fruits from the various trees, then, every morning, when the royal court was in session, he took the fruit collected to the king.

One day, the gardener collected some cherries and took them to the king. The king was in a bad mood. When he picked a cherry to taste, it was sour. So, he vented his anger on the gardener and threw a cherry at the gardener. It hit him on the forehead but the gardener said, "*God is merciful!*"

The king enquired, "*You must be hurt and angry but you say God is merciful. Why?*" The gardener said, "*Your Majesty, I was going to bring pineapples for you today. But I changed my mind. If you had thrown a pineapple at me, I would have been badly hurt - God was merciful for having changed my mind.*"