



EXODUS: Justice for God's People on the Move

Pull-out bible study material

Please take away to use in your parishes and groups

Act I

Call: Genesis 1:27

So God created humans in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

Musing:

After silence follows looking. The religious texts of the Ancient Near East spoke of kings or high priests as being the mouthpieces of the gods; and spoke of idols as being images of the gods. Into that world came the revolutionary texts of the book of Genesis, proclaiming that *every human being*, male or female, bears the image of God. Centuries later, Christian texts declared that the people of God are as high as *kings* and *priests*, giving them the responsibility of being God's ambassadors in the world.

Do we, looking at ourselves and at each other, recognise God's revolutionary call to us, vulnerable and flawed human beings but with the image of God stamped up on us, to be his representatives? If it is human beings, not idols, who are the image of God, can we begin to see the entire world as a cosmic temple wherein, as priests, we can lead others to love justice and peace?

Prayer:

God of my making,

You have dethroned the kings and idols of our construction, and you have proclaimed to all creation that it is we that bear your image. Help me to treat all human beings with the dignity that you have given them. Help me to see myself as your image on earth, where I am not the master of all but the servant of all. Help me to look at your skies as the dome under which I am privileged to exist, and humbly I ask for the grace to reflect your beauty to everyone and everything around me.

Amen.

Act II

Call: Genesis 6:5

The Lord saw that the wickedness of humans was great in the earth and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made humans on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.

Musing:

And yet, we craved more than being God's representatives. Instead of resembling the Goodness and Love, we have attempted to redefine what is good and what is love according to our own lights. In trying to be like God, we have dethroned the One whose love had dethroned all other pseudo-gods. Regardless of our differing traditions, we know and feel in our hearts that this world is far from what it is supposed to be. We know that we and others are meant to be living in a better place. The Scriptures call this sensing "being in exile".

Where you meet discrimination and injustice, have you resisted it with all of your strength, yet all the while retaining love for the perpetrators? Do you remain mindful that we are still on our journey "out of exile" into the new creation that Jesus has inaugurated?

Prayer:

Lord,

How can I sing the songs of my home when I am away from it? How long, O Lord?

How long will I cry out to you?

How long will our exile last?

I offer you my sighs, tears and confusion.

Take them and remember them when you come into your Kingdom.

Amen

Act III

Call: Romans 8: 18-23

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God, for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its enslavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning together as it suffers together the pains of labour, and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

Musing:

He did not leave us marred. He came as one of us to be the image of God par excellence. The good news, or the Gospel as people call it, is the annunciation that time of exile is drawing to its close, and we are on our way to be whom God wants us to be, to see him as he is, and by seeing him to be like him.

How can we teach ourselves and others that whilst our story is not yet finished, its ending is secure?

Prayer:

Lover of my whole being

I thank you for not leaving me in my sighs, tears, and confusion. You have travelled the road I have been on, and now are with me in my desert wanderings. You are not a stranger to injustice but my companion in it. Lord, help me to see the world and your image in others as you see them, help me to speak as you spoke, to hear as you heard, to listen as you listened, and having spoken and heard and listened, to embrace as you embraced.

Amen.

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