

An Excess of Presence

Monday, 7/13/09 – Read Exodus 3:1-6

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Peter Rollins describes the human experience of God this way: “Instead of being limited by the poverty of absence we are short-circuited by the excess of presence.” The experience of God is often a feeling of being overwhelmed by awe and grandeur -- as if our perceptions were overloaded. This week let’s look at some of the Bible’s descriptions of the experience of God. As we do, think of your own experience. Your experience may not be so dramatic -- or occasionally it may be. Think about the different ways you have experienced God. ... Today’s reading is Moses’ experience of God in a burning bush. And verse 5 calls this place “holy ground.” Has the Presence of God made some place “holy ground” or “sacred space” for you? Make a list of such places. What is it like to revisit them?

Tuesday, 7/14/09 – Read Exodus 19:16-19; 20:18-21

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Today’s reading portrays the Hebrew people at the foot of Mount Sinai, after they have escaped from slavery in Egypt, as Moses is about to receive the Ten Commandments. ... What’s your reaction to this passage? What do you think of the people’s response in verse 19? ... Many people nowadays dislike the way the Bible speaks of the fear of God. What’s the difference between fear and awe or reverence? ... Look closely at verse 20 -- where Moses tells them first not to be afraid -- and then says that God only wants to evoke fear/awe/reverence? What’s your experience of awe? Is that different from fear?

Wednesday, 7/15/09 – Read 1 Kings 19:8-12

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Elijah is running for his life. He’s running from the queen (Jezebel) who wants to kill him. He winds up on “Horeb the mount of God” -- another name for Sinai (where Moses encountered the burning bush, where the Hebrews experienced God in thunder, where Moses received the Ten Commandments) -- holy ground. ... For Elijah, though, God speaks not in dramatic thunder but in “a sound of sheer silence.” ... What’s your experience? Have you ever experienced God in the quiet or in silence -- in some understated fashion? Did the silence evoke in you a sense of awe and wonder?

Thursday, 7/16/09 – Read Isaiah 6:1-8

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Today’s reading is one of the Hebrew scripture’s best-known accounts of the experience of God. Our normal human response to such an experience is to feel overwhelmed, to feel over-saturated with awe. Have you ever experienced anything like that? If you have, make some notes on your memories of the experience. ... If you cannot remember such an experience, maybe think about looking at stars or mountains or a grove of redwood trees or the ocean or a baby. What has evoked for you a sense of awe? Jot down some notes on what that experience was like for you.

Friday, 7/17/09 – Read Luke 5:1-11

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Sometimes we are surprised when things happen in our lives that are totally unexpected. Sometimes we are just overwhelmed by a moment of startling goodness. Perhaps this was Peter’s feeling when, under Jesus’

guidance, he caught an enormous haul of fish. ... When was the last time you were startled by a surprising goodness? How did you feel? How did you respond? Did you, like Peter, think: "I don't deserve all this." Or was your response different?

Saturday, 7/18/09 – Read Revelation 7:9-17

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Some people do have dreams and visions in which they sense the presence of God. (A vision is maybe best thought of as a dream that comes while we are awake.) We don't talk about these experiences very much nowadays, but they still happen -- sometimes -- for some people. Revelation tells us that this book is a vision given to a man named John. (See Revelation 1:9-16) ... Have you ever had a dream when it seemed like God was present? How did that feel to you? What was it like?

Sunday, 7/19/09 – Read John 1:14-18 and 2 Corinthians 4:6

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Christian faith has always claimed that something very special happened in Jesus of Nazareth -- that in Jesus God chose to come to us in a form purposely limited to our ability to perceive. Or, in the words of today's reading (from John), Jesus has made God known. Or, said another way: Jesus is the human face of God. ... Does that make sense to you? ... When you think of Jesus or read about Jesus in the Bible, do you have a sense of the glory of God and the love of God shining in the face of Jesus?

My Faith Journal, July 12, 2009

Believing in God #3

TMI

[Too Much Information]

Too Much Information

Over-Saturated by Presence

"Hypernymity"

Exodus 19:16-19; 20:18-21

Shining in the Face of Jesus

2 Corinthians 4:6

John 1:14-18

Each day this week, take a few minutes. Begin with PRAYER. Then READ through the Bible passage indicated on the inside of this guide. WRITE down your own thoughts, reactions, observations. ANSWER THE QUESTION to begin connecting the Bible with your life. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.