

## Lectio Divina of 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time - B (January 31/2021)

**Opening Prayer:** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Heavenly Father, We thank you for this evening to meditate on the Holy Prophet Moses and Jesus the Greatest Prophets and our own prophetic roles as Christians in our families, communities, society, church and politics. We praise and bless you for sending us your prophets in the past and at present to guide us in our path, convict us, correct us, confront us in our failures and comfort us in our sorrows. They are your conscience and compassionate face for us to brighten our lives when we are worried and feel dryness in life. In the fullness of time, you sent your beloved Son Jesus, the greatest prophet who not only gave us the words of eternal life but He gave himself up on the cross for our eternal life. He is our Supreme Prophet. Pour out your blessings upon us at this time as we meditate on your words, calling us to meditate on your holy prophets in the Bible and inviting us to meditate on our prophetic roles in our life. We make this prayer in the most powerful name Jesus. Amen.

### **1st Reading: A Reading from the book of Deuteronomy 18:15-20**

Moses spoke to all the people, saying: "A prophet like me will the Lord, your God, raise up for you from among your own kin; to him you shall listen. This is exactly what you requested of the Lord, your God, at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let us not again hear the voice of the Lord, our God, nor see this great fire any more, lest we die.' And the Lord said to me, 'This was well said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their kin, and will put my words into his mouth; he shall tell them all that I command him. Whoever will not listen to my words which he speaks in my name, I myself will make him answer for it. But if a prophet presumes to speak in my name an oracle that I have not commanded him to speak, or speaks in the name of other gods, he shall die. (The Word of the Lord/ Thanks be to God)

**Commentary:** Moses was about to die. The Chosen People were terrified because they were about to lose the person who had been successfully leading them through the wilderness toward the Promised Land. They were also going to lose a prophet who had been keeping them informed of Yahweh's will. When he died, how would they find out what God wanted of them? God answers the question by promising Moses that He will heed the people's request and "*raise up for them a prophet like you from among their kin, and ... put My words into his mouth; he shall tell them all that I command him.*" Jesus is the prophet, foretold by Moses in today's First Reading which is made clear from the words of St. Peter in Acts 3:22 For Moses said: 'A prophet like me will the Lord, your God, raise up for you from among your own kinsmen; to him you shall listen in all that he may say to you.

### **Responsorial Psalm R. (8) If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.**

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD; let us acclaim the rock of our salvation. Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

***R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.***

Come, let us bow down in worship; let us kneel before the LORD who made us. For he is our God, and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides.

*R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

Oh, that today you would hear his voice: "Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the desert, Where your fathers tempted me; they tested me though they had seen my works." *R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

**2nd Reading: A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to Corinthians Brothers and sisters:**

I should like you to be free of anxieties. An unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But a married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided. An unmarried woman or a virgin is anxious about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy in both body and spirit. A married woman, on the other hand, is anxious about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. I am telling you this for your own benefit, not to impose a restraint upon you, but for the sake of propriety and adherence to the Lord without distraction (**The Word of the Lord/ Thanks be to God**)

**Commentary:** The early Christians in Corinth strongly hoped that the end of this world and the second coming of Christ were imminent and so they thought they should not enter into marriage, lest marriage should interfere with their whole-hearted service of God in preparation for the second coming of Jesus. As a good teacher and prophet, St. Paul exercised his God-given authority to teach people that marriage is a holy state ordained by God and that it is a life-long partnership according to the teaching of the Lord. Further, Paul recommended the life of celibacy, he himself had chosen, to the non-married only if they felt they could live such a life. The advantage of celibacy, as Paul explained, was that celibates would have the freedom to serve God fully with the fewest earthly cares and worries.

**Gospel Reading: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark 1:14-20**

Then they came to Capernaum, and on the sabbath Jesus entered the synagogue and taught. The people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. In their synagogue was a man with an unclean spirit; he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" Jesus rebuked him and said, "Quiet! Come out of him!" The unclean spirit convulsed him and with a loud cry came out of him. All were amazed and asked one another, "What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him." His fame spread everywhere throughout the whole region of Galilee. (**The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ / Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**)

**Meditation on Jesus' prophetic ministry :** Prophet was *chosen among the people* by God and sent for a particular mission *with divine authority*. He/she was the *mouthpiece of God*, delivering only God's messages and not their own "I will put my words in his mouth and he will tell them everything I command him" They *acted individually not as a team* although there a school for the prophets (I Sam 10:15). They were *the conscience of their society*. They were rejected by the

people because people did not want to hear messages like God’s judgment and punishment. In spite of people’s indifference to them, they were neither silent, nor afraid of anyone because the power of God’s word could not stop them from preaching.

**Moses the Greatest Prophet:** In the history of Israel, Moses stands as the greatest prophet because Moses delivered the Israelites out of Egypt. He performed many miracles to authenticate that he was sent by God. He led them cross the Red Sea. He celebrated the Passover feast. He received the 10 commandment at Mount Sinai and gave them as God’s laws. He showed the Israelites the promised land of Israel at Mount Nebo. When he was about to die, God promised Moses that in time to come, He would raise up another prophet like him. The golden words of dying Moses, “*a prophet like me,*” referred in Jesus Christ (Acts 3:22; 7:37) who is the “preacher with authority,” mentioned in today’s Gospel. Like Moses, Jesus was called and sent to speak the words of God the Father. Like Moses, Jesus rebuked and spoke against evils in persons and the society, uttering predictions like the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Like Moses, Jesus also performed miracles not to show off but to authenticate his message coming from God. The unclean spirits recognized him as the Holy one of God. Apart from the above, we find below some **striking similarities between Moses and Jesus**

Moses	Jesus
<b><u>Childhood:</u></b> Pharaoh became worried of the increasing number of Israelites and wanted to kill all Jewish male babies including Moses who was saved miraculously	Herod wanted to kill all the Jewish babies of 2 years old and the baby Jesus was saved miraculously.
<b><u>The angel of the Lord</u></b> appeared to him in the burning bush and called him Moses	The angel appeared to Mary and said, ‘you will conceive in your womb a child and you shall name him Jesus
<b><u>Miracles:</u></b> Moses did many extraordinary miracles in order to convince Pharaoh of the mighty power of God	Jesus did many miracles to prove his divine sonship.
<b><u>Passover:</u></b> Moses celebrated the Passover feast before their desert journey.	Jesus celebrated the Last supper before his departure from the earth
<b><u>Manna:</u></b> God gave manna, the food from heaven.	Jesus said, “I am the living bread coming down from heaven”
<b><u>Blood:</u></b> Moses turned water into blood. Ratified the OT covenant by the sprinkling the blood of the animals	Jesus changed water into wine and later wine to his blood. Jesus ratified the NT giving his own blood.
<b><u>Water:</u></b> God provided water for the Israelites through Moses.	Jesus gave life giving water, the Holy Spirit.

<b><u>Twelve &amp; seventy:</u></b> Moses selected <i>twelve men</i> and sent them on a special mission. Moses <i>gathered seventy leaders</i> for special duties.	Jesus chose the twelve apostles for His great mission in the world. Jesus sent seventy disciples as missionaries.
<b><u>Ten commandments:</u></b> Moses received the ten commandments from God at the mount Sinai.	Jesus gave the new laws of God at the mount of Beatitudes.
<b><u>Glory:</u></b> When Moses descended from Mount Sinai, his face was shining with the glory of God {Exodus 34: 29, 30, 35}.	<b><u>Transfiguration:</u></b> During the transfiguration at Mount Tabor, the face of Jesus was shining like the sun{Matthew 17: 1-4}.
<b><u>Rejection:</u></b> Moses was rejected by the Israelites	Jesus was rejected by his own people
<b><u>Death:</u></b> Moses died on the Mount Nebo	Jesus died on the Mount Calvary

**Jesus is greater than Moses:** The book of Hebrews shows Jesus greater than Moses. (1) Jesus is greater than Moses in his person (Heb 3: 2-3). Moses was a servant of God but Jesus is the son of God. Jesus is God himself, the second person of the Most Holy Trinity. (2) Moses was a prophet of the Israelites in his time while Jesus is Lord of the universe. (3) Moses prefigured Jesus while Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. We need prophets and prophetic leaders in politics and church to introduce God and social and moral ethics in public schools/ to speak against abortion and other evils/ culture of consumerism/to speak for pro life/ culture of life/ to speak for the poor and marginalized/ to speak of the danger of mass media, relativism, scientism and modernism. This is how Moses and Jesus were the conscience of God, conscientizing the people. As ministers, parents, teachers, workers, doctors, nurses and public servants, let us be prophets in our life in order to bring God consciousness in and around and in every area of our christian life.

**Concluding Prayer:** Lord Jesus, we praise you and bless you for enlightening us on your prophetic role in the gospel. You not only fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies in your public ministry but also made prophecies of your kingdom on earth, the end of the world and your glorious coming as the Lord of the lords and King of the kings. The Spirit of the Lord was upon you. You were anointed by God on the day of your baptism in the river Jordan to take up your prophetic ministry in words and acts. All the words that came out of your mouth were filled with anointing. As the greatest prophet, you brought good news to the poor and the most neglected ones in the society. You gave sight to the physically and spiritually blind people. You included the gentiles, the Samaritans and Sinners in the world of division and hatred and gave them hope and purpose in their life. When dark clouds hang over us and threaten our lives, may our lives be illumined by your gospel values of Love, Truthfulness and Justice so that we may live and lead a quiet, peaceful and prophetic life, offering hope and comfort to those who come in our life. Blessed Mother, Queen of Apostles, Pray for us. **(Hail Mary/Priestly blessing)**