

The Twenty-Second Sunday of Pentecost

November 5, 2006

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Psalms 119:1-16 or 119:1-8

Hebrews 7:23-28

Mark 12:28-34

In the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

“Tell us about God.” Moses comes down from the mountain, back to the camp of the Israelites carrying stone tablets – we all know the scene – telling them that he has met with God and has received these commandments, the testimony of the will of God.

“God; what God? Who is this God you mention?” Of course they asked those questions; so would we. “Describe Him, please.” But Moses can’t describe God. Moses has seen only a burning bush and a great light; he’s heard only the words of the commandments.

Do we really know any more than they did? Do we have more than His words to be our guide? Not really. We do, however, have the words of this morning’s readings: Deuteronomy, Hebrews, and Mark.

We have the great, ancient prayer of the people of Israel, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.”

It’s two parts. The first part says that God is alone; there is no other God. It’s a statement that no matter where the people might be, God will be with them. They need have no fear of the gods worshipped by

other peoples in other places. Their God is always present with them in any situation. God is One – universal, undivided, undiminished. What incredible words of comfort for a besieged people living in treacherous and uncertain times: incredible words for ancient Israel, and for you and me! We can be assured that God will be present for us.

The second part tells us what our response to that all-present, all-concerned God must be. How can we possibly do other than to love God with heart and soul and strength? That's pure gratitude. Recognize that it is God who takes the lead, God who reaches out, God who makes that promise.

Remembering is not simply failing to forget. Remembering isn't nostalgia. Remembering is acting as though we are conscious, physically conscious, of the presence of God every minute. Remembering is acting with God in mind.

How do we do that? First, you and I are called to live in His presence and to make Him a part of everything we do. That, dear hearts, is a tall order, but generations of Christians have done just that; they are living so today. Then we are called to teach that sense of the presence to the generations to come. Christian Education is an all-day, every-day task. We teach by word and example, and children listen and watch. They must know that there is no time limit on God's presence, no past or future, but an eternal present.

And Our Lord gives us the final commandment, fleshing out all others; "Love your neighbor as yourself." If we truly live in God's presence, we cannot do otherwise. We will, as He would have us, remember Him, see Him in the faces of all we encounter. Perhaps we will teach them by reflecting God's presence to them. We will certainly teach ourselves.

In His Holy Name.