

HOMILY ~ 3RD SUNDAY LENT

March 23, 2025

How many interruptions do you think you have every day? Some days I have quite a few. And if you are in the middle of doing something productive they can be very distracting. How many times have you been having a meaningful discussion with someone, you are interrupted for a few seconds, and then forgot what you were talking about? Then you have to get back into the flow of the conversation or what you were doing before the interruption. Some interruptions are just distractions. Others are meaningful interruptions. The meaningful interruptions are sometimes God's way of telling us what he is calling us to do each day. It is important to pay attention to these. I think we need to learn to identify and pay attention to the meaningful interruptions and try and minimize the interruptions that are just distractions.

In the Gospel reading today, Moses had a meaningful interruption from his job tending his father-in-law's flock. The burning bush that was not consumed by the fire was an interruption he could hardly ignore, and it was a good thing that he paid attention to it. He received the first in a series of messages calling him to lead the people of Israel out of slavery, the calling he was going to spend the rest of his life doing.

Our theme for Lent this year is Relationships, Service and Faith, the three things that lead to a meaningful, successful and purposeful life in this world and the next. I think identifying the meaningful interruptions in our lives is important in identifying the service God is calling us to do. Sometimes we get big interruptions from God that we cannot ignore like Moses and the burning bush. We are likely to pay attention to those. These usually involve big changes in our lives and we spend time discerning them. On the other hand, some interruptions are just distractions. When I first got email on my phone the constant dings made me crazy. I turned that off right away. I usually look at email once a day and that is enough. I do not need an alert every time there is breaking news. It can wait until I spend the hour or so getting the news each day. I have been with people who keep looking at their phone and they say I have to pay attention to my phone in case one of my children needs

something. Really, your children are in their 40s. Maybe you need to do that if you have minor children. I cannot tell you what pings and alerts are important for you. I am just suggesting that you take a good look at them and decide if they are just distractions. You may be getting so caught up in the distractions that you miss the important things going on in your life right in front of you.

Some meaningful interruptions are big, but others are more subtle. I think it is important to spend some quiet time with God each day to be open to his interruptions. I sometimes talk to people about distractions in prayer. We need to make the distinction between what are distractions and what may be messages from God. If I start thinking about what I am going to have for breakfast, that is probably a distraction. If someone comes to mind that I have not thought of in a while, maybe God is calling me to contact them. Sometimes a solution to a problem that I have been struggling with just pops into my mind, even though I was not praying about that. Where did that come from? To identify the service that God is calling us to each day, I think we need to enter into the lives of the people around us. We make a plan each day and then God laughs. He may have something totally different in mind for us. Sometimes people are telling us what they need from us and we miss it because we are only half listening because we are distracted by our phone. Sometimes we just stick to our plan and avoid the service God is calling us to. I have found that most of the time, when something unexpected need comes to me, God will help me to work it into my day so I get everything done that I need to get done. A stranger in crisis, a community in need, a friend that needs attention, these are meaningful interruptions. The service we are called to may be big service projects, but the service we are called to each day may be a whole series of acts of kindness. So, learn the difference between interruptions that are just distractions and those that are meaningful interruptions. Attend to what is meaningful.