

Lent 2

I stand here in need of God's mercy and grace. May I speak in the name of the God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Jesus won't run away, Jesus won't hide and Jesus won't give up. That's who Jesus is, that's who God is. God will not give up on us.

In our first reading we heard of the covenant God made with Abram, to be kept between God and Abram and Abram's descendants. And although Abram and his descendants did not always remain faithful to that covenant, God remained faithful. God never stopped loving, never stopped caring.

This is why Jesus, the Son of God, came, human as we are, to show who God truly is. A God of love and grace, who cares about Abram and his descendants and all human beings, who won't run away, won't hide and won't give up on any of us.

Jesus showed people who God is through healing the sick, through sharing meals and through telling stories of God's great love and grace. Jesus stood with the poor, the oppressed and the disempowered and he spoke truth to power. And that did not go unnoticed by the strongmen of the day. Herod clearly felt threatened by Jesus and was keen to eliminate him. And that is why some pharisees are warning Jesus and tell him to run away before it's too late:

Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.

Those were not empty threats, as we well know. Jesus made Herod and many others deeply uncomfortable and this led to him being lynched on a cross eventually. Despite the real threat to his life, Jesus doesn't run away, doesn't hide, doesn't give up. Instead, he responds:

Go and tell that fox for me, "Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work"

In other words, no matter what threats or dangers will come his way, Jesus will continue the work he came to do, healing, liberating, proclaiming the Kingdom of God and on the third day he will finish it all, when he will overcome even death and be raised to new life. Jesus won't run away, won't hide and won't give up on making known God's unconditional love for all.

How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

God longs to gather us, to show us love and care, as a hen does with her chicks. But then and now human beings might be too busy with life, too scared that God does not really want them, too ashamed about the darker sides of our lives, too hurt or angry by the bad stuff that has happened in our lives. And so we run away, or hide or give up on God entirely.

What Jesus' words and actions in our gospel reading today teach us, is that nothing and no one can stop God from loving us, from reaching out to us over and over again. Gently and patiently God will keep inviting us to receive God's unconditional love and welcome. No matter what happens, no matter what we do, no matter how scared or angry we are, God won't run away, God won't hide and God won't give up on anyone, including you. So will we let ourselves be gathered up by God the mother hen?

Amen.