



Lent reflection for March 19, 2024

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Exodus 5:1-6:1

Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Let my people go, so that they may celebrate a festival to me in the wilderness." But Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should listen to him and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go." Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has revealed himself to us; let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to the Lord our God, or he will fall upon us with pestilence or sword." But the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why are you taking the people away from their work? Get to your labors!" Pharaoh continued, "Now they are more numerous than the people of the land and yet you want them to stop laboring!" That same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people, as well as their supervisors, "You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as before; let them go and gather straw for themselves. But you shall require of them the same quantity of bricks as they have made previously; do not diminish it, for they are lazy; that is why they cry, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' Let heavier work be laid on them; then they will pay attention to it and not to deceptive words."

So the taskmasters and the supervisors of the people went out and said to the people, "Thus says Pharaoh: I will not give you straw. Go and get straw yourselves, wherever you can find it, but your work will not be lessened in the least." So the people scattered throughout the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. The taskmasters urged them on, saying, "Complete your work, the same daily assignment as when you were given straw." And the Israelite supervisors whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them were beaten and were asked, "Why did you not finish the required quantity of bricks yesterday and today, as you did before?"

Then the Israelite supervisors came to Pharaoh and cried, "Why do you treat your servants like this? No straw is given to your servants, yet they say to us, 'Make bricks!' Look how your servants are beaten! But the fault is with you." He said, "You are lazy, lazy; that is why you say, 'Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord.' Go now and work, for no straw shall be given you, but you shall still deliver the same number of bricks." The Israelite supervisors saw that they were in trouble when they were told, "You shall not lessen your daily number of bricks." As they left Pharaoh, they came upon Moses and Aaron, who were waiting to

meet them. They said to them, “The Lord look upon you and judge! You have brought us into bad odor with Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.”

Then Moses turned to the Lord and said, “O my Lord, why have you mistreated this people? Why did you ever send me? Since I first came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has mistreated this people, and you have done nothing at all to deliver your people.”

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh: indeed, by a mighty hand he will let them go; by a mighty hand he will drive them out of his land.”

Today’s Reflection is by Maeve Farrell

Work is paramount in all of our lives, especially in a career-focused place like New York. “So, what do you do?” is often the question you’re asked when meeting someone for the first time. And while work is a valuable thing we can all contribute to society, I often wonder if it takes us away from God. Work is considered the most important thing we do with our lives, and it’s acceptable and even expected to put aside family, friends, and worship to ensure a job well done.

And sometimes, Pharaoh feels like an awfully familiar voice. “You’re lazy!” “You’re not trying hard enough!” With work following us home on our cellphones, sometimes it feels like the amount of bricks we need to make only gets greater and greater.

I’m not sure what the solution is. It’s the kind of thing that can only be changed if everyone works together to demand change. Though Moses wasn’t sure why God chose the path He did, God was faithful to Moses and the Israelites. Maybe today He’s working through the unions being formed all over the country, or the women and people of color demanding equal pay for equal work. In the mean time, we just have to keep putting one foot in front of the other, and make sure we prioritize God.



Maeve is a software engineer and lifelong Brooklynite who began attending Holy Apostles in 2021. She appreciates the fellowship, community, and fun! In her spare time, she loves to cook, bake, play music, run, and read.