

LENT 2024

JOURNEY to FREEDOM

SATURDAY 17TH FEBRUARY

READ: Exodus 2:11-24

***'But Moses fled from Pharaoh. He settled in the
land of Midian, and sat down by a well.'***

Exodus 2:15

'and sat down by a well'. Sitting by a well has positive echoes, indeed positive intentions, in both the Old and New Testament narratives. Jacob sat by a well when he went to the east to seek a wife (Genesis 29:2ff) He rolled away the stone that sealed the well and allowed Rachel's sheep to be watered—and so he met Rachel and—much later—married her. Jesus sat by Jacob's well and there met the Samaritan woman (John 4:7ff).

But here we have Moses, also in a strange land, and who also watered the sheep of a woman from another background and later married her. Moses fled from Pharaoh. We tend to forget that as a result of the events in yesterday's reading, Moses was a member of Pharaoh's court, brought up as an Egyptian in the innermost circle of the Egyptian rulers. We usually jump from the papyrus basket to the much older Moses, who came back from Midian complete with a wonder-working staff and an official spokesperson.

Today we look at how Moses started to mature. He saw and felt the mistreatment of the Hebrews, and rashly killed a precursor of those who later insisted on bricks without straw. Challenged, he fled to Midian, sat by a well, watered a flock, and accepted Zipporah, a Midian woman, as his wife, and had a child with her.

But note the repeated echoes of unexpected interaction with those who aren't your immediate kindred: Jacob travelled a long way to sit by a well and find a wife: Moses fled from both his birth-kin and his adopted family status: and Jesus not only talked with a Samaritan woman, but a highly disreputable one.

This reading as a whole challenges us: it is entirely outward looking. Where are our moments by a well? How do we travel—spiritually if not literally—out from our comfort zone in our church buildings to meet all those others who—like the Samaritan woman—need to meet Jesus? In verse 24 of our reading God heard 'their groaning'. Do we?

■ **Let us pray:** *Lord, show us where to sit, who to welcome, and how to listen. Amen.*

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