

LENT 2024

JOURNEY to FREEDOM

THURSDAY 21ST MARCH

READ: Exodus 19:1-15

'The whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation'
Exodus 19:5b-6a

The account of Moses preparing to meet with God and receive the Ten Commandments is full of awe. A covenant was about to be made which would mark God's people out as holy and special; because of their reverence for the one God, the keeping of a Sabbath day, and their respect for one another.

After all his doubts when he stood before Pharaoh in the land of Egypt, Moses was set apart as the man who would lead God's people to the Promised Land. God's people were about to begin a journey into the wilderness, with little water or food. Yet in this holy moment, God's presence binds fast to them, so that they do not walk alone.

The people had to prepare themselves—so that body, mind and soul were completely ready to meet with the God who had rescued them from slavery. They were asked to respect where God's glory would be made known, and not to touch Mount Sinai. I wonder which places you have been filled with awe at the glorious sight of what God has created?

Consider the times when humanity has failed to heed this instruction not to touch what is holy within God's creation. The times when greed has led us to damage and desecrate the fragile beauty of the gift God asked us to care for.

Pray for the people who are walking through wildernesses of drought, fire, or flood because of climate change brought about by human overuse of this gift. In this season of repentance, consider how your own lifestyle habits might change to live out such awe and respect for God's presence within creation.

Moses said to the people 'Prepare for the third day' (v.15). As we prepare to celebrate Christ's resurrection on the third day—we tell the story of God's new creation and covenant that bring healing and forgiveness of our sins. Yet Mary could not touch the Risen Christ - a sign of the awe and reverence we are called to have for all that reveals God's glory in the gift of life in creation.

Let us pray: *Lord, as we see Your awesome glory, teach us new reverence for Your gift of life in creation, made present in Christ our redeemer. Amen.*

The Revd Carol Backhouse, Vicar of Christ Church Lancaster