

Remember Who You Are

No matter how many times a parent reminds his or her child to put away his toys, to not leave the tricycle in the driveway or teddy in the bird bath, it never gets done. One day in a fit of desperation, a parent asked his four year old why she could never remember. The child replied, "Perhaps it is because I have such a good forgetter."

The children of Israel were good forgetters. Over and over again they forgot what God had done for them. Over and over again they forgot to keep their side of the covenant. As long as Moses was there to remind them by his presence, his teaching, and his remembering, they were all right. But when Moses went away, they forgot.

How like us. We too forget. We get caught up in the moment or in the demands of the new situation. We get swept away by the things at hand and we forget. We do it in our personal lives. We do it collectively as communities and nations. We forget. Then comes some crisis! Perhaps it is the Stock Market and the economy going into a nose dive.

So the children of Israel come to Aaron and ask for a tangible likeness of God. The Canaanites have one, why shouldn't we? The trouble is, once they created God in their own image, they forget the God who created them. Thus the prophets call the people to remember, that they are to be a light to the people of the world, to be forward looking. Thus Paul writes to his friend in Philippi to remember the things which they have been taught and to practice them because the results of such practice will be nothing less than the peace of God.

"Remember who you are," says William Willimon, in the book by the same name, "a child of God, forgiven, gifted and saved." Remember who you are, a people redeemed from slavery in Egypt, a covenanting community, ambassadors for Christ, a Christian community in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, straight or gay, insider or outsider, for we are all one in Christ Jesus our Lord. "Remember whose you are and rejoice in the Lord always," writes Paul to us across the centuries.