

**Monsignor Dennis Sheehan**  
**Homily Given on March 7, 2010**  
**3rd Sunday of Lent – Liturgical Year C**

Catholic preachers usually don't pay much heed to the first Sunday reading. But today's first reading is rich and full of drama. (Besides that, the Gospel is very complex!) It's what is often termed a "call story". Now the Bible is full of call stories. Isaiah and Jeremiah, the great prophets, were called by God. So was the prophet Samuel. In the New Testament, everyone knows the story of Mary and the call through Gabriel the archangel. The great apostle St. Paul was called on the road to Damascus.

Why so many "call stories"? What are they about? To get some small idea, let's look together at today's story of Moses and the burning bush. What do we know about Moses as today's episode opens? He's in Midian, pagan territory. He's there because, years ago, he killed an Egyptian taskmaster who was abusive to Moses' Jewish people. There's doubtless a price on his head, so he had fled decades ago to a foreign country. More than that, Moses had settled in. He'd married a local girl, the daughter of the pagan priest. He had a job – tending sheep – and a family. Memories of his Hebrew past and his life in Egypt were long ago and far away.

Then one day out in the wilderness, he sees that bush. It's a fire but not burned, flaming but not even singed. He takes a closer look. The closer look changes his whole life. From the bush, Moses hears the call of God. Moses is to go back to Egypt, take charge of his captive people and lead them to freedom from Pharaoh's slavery. The God of his ancestors calls him to be a hero.

Small wonder he dithers and dallies. He pesters this newly-found God about a name, as much to stall him as anything. Yet in the end, Moses will heed the call.

What then about you or me? The bush burned first for us on the day we were baptized. But surprisingly, the burning bush speaks to us often in those events that interrupt our comfortable routine. And as it was for Moses, our life turns upside down. The bush burns when the family next door loses a parent. The bush burns and calls to us when a family member gets sick. The bush may burn when your church community needs your time, your energy, your service. So bushes don't burn just for Moses. They blaze for us. When they do, like Moses, we turn aside and look. God calls us no less than Moses. We can dither and dally as he did. But, in the end, saying yes to the call opens up new horizons and possibilities in life we never imagined.

So go ahead. Take a look like Moses. God's voice is there.

Blessed Lent to one and all.