



The Cell of Love is Always Open

Father Kolbe's cell is always open! Within this sacred place the fire of the burning bush, the fire of Love, is never extinguished. We're not speaking mere poetry. The ever ancient, ever new reality of Mount Sinai calls to mind an eternal truth: God remembers us. God remembers humanity and every individual person.

This "remembrance," is fundamental to the covenant made between Yahweh and Israel through Moses. From slavery under Pharaoh they arrived at Sinai – the Divine Mountain – where they too experienced the "burning bush." God (symbolized by the fire) dwelled in the frail bush without consuming or destroying it. Yahweh is the God of Israel, and Israel is God's people, he came among them not to destroy, but to build up. The fire still burns. Today, men and women are called in their fragility to be a chosen dwelling place for God. They continue to experience Mount Sinai and the burning bush, because the love of God is everlasting.

The image of fire evokes the power of God's entrance into the life of Moses, but why did it not consume the bush?

Rabbis over the centuries have attempted to give a response. According to Rabbi Jose "the bush is the tree of sorrows and God suffers when the Hebrews suffer." Rabbi Nahman responds: "the flame burns but the bush is not consumed, because pain will be forever in Israel, but God does not want it to consume his people." (Shemot Rabba, II.5). The same Midrashic text says that God says to Moses: "Do you know how to participate in the sufferings of Israel? I speak to you, surrounded by thorns, as a direct participation in your sorrows." It is as if God says to Moses, "I am in your sorrow, the sorrow of your people."

Where was God in Auschwitz?

Father Faccenda, our founder, loved to say: "(Father Kolbe's cell) is a tomb that does not close on the mortal remains of St. Maximilian, but remains open to show the heavenly message of love to the world of today and tomorrow." The cell of love – the cell where Fr. Kolbe was martyred - is like the burning bush. It is always open, because the fire of love was never extinguished and continues to enflame other hearts.

Like Jeremiah, Father Kolbe's heart burned with love. (cf. Jeremiah 20:9) He was enflamed with the love that God poured into him. He loved heroically, because the fire of love, God, cannot be contained. Father Kolbe was enflamed with the love of God, and so in him our Lord entered among a wounded and broken humanity, and participated in the suffering of His people. In the Cell of Love, God was present in the heart of St. Maximilian Kolbe.

God burst into the life of Moses, burst into the life of Father Kolbe, and bursts into our life to say to each one: I am always with you. I am with you to enflame you with my everlasting love, so that you can give witness that love has conquered. "Only Love Creates."

Angela Esposito

*Fr. Kolbe Missionary of the Immaculata
For the Community of Harmęże, Poland*