

Friday night, I had the occasion to go to the comedy show titled, “Late Night Catechism.” In it, an actress dressed as a nun takes a light-hearted approach to Catholic schools, and nuns in particular.

At one point in the show, “Sister” allows audience questions ... taking a particular risk, but also showing how quickly the actress can think on her feet.

One of the questions she was asked was “How big is God?” To which she answers, “Infinite” ... and then adds, “like a really, really, big, fat guy.”

In the first reading, we hear of Moses’ encounter with the burning bush. Trying to get a grasp on just ‘who’ or ‘what’ God is ... especially since Moses is being sent to speak on behalf of God - he asks what is God’s name ... and is given the equally cryptic response of “I am who am” ... and to tell them “I am sent me to you.”

Moses understood that it was going to be very difficult to talk about God, and even when he is given a name, things don’t get any easier.

In the Gospel, Jesus is speaking in an effort to clear up for His listeners, and for us today, regarding two attributes of God — namely His JUSTICE and His MERCY.

They tell him about some rioters who were killed by the governor ... and he adds a story about workers who were killed in a construction accident.

Then Jesus poses the question:

“Do you think that because [they] suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other[s]”?

and

“do you think they were more guilty than everyone else”?

In a sense, the people were trying to determine God’s JUSTICE in dealing with particular people who died in two recent tragedies.

Jesus states that in dealing with God's JUSTICE, no one is safe ... by answering their questions with:

*“if you do not repent,
you will all perish as they did.”*

But in a parable Jesus desires to make a greater point — that of God's MERCY.

In the parable of the fig tree, the owner has been waiting for three years for something — ANYTHING — from this particular fig tree ... but in all that time, there has been nothing to show.

He orders his gardener to *“cut it down.”*

In essence — executing JUSTICE on the useless fig tree.

Yet the gardener pleads for MERCY ... and offers to take special care of that tree in order to give it one more year.

For ourselves, we experience a bit of difficulty in balancing our own understanding God's MERCY and God's JUSTICE.

In our own case we desire MERCY from God — especially when dealing with ourselves (or those we love) ... and JUSTICE from God — usually when dealing with others (or those whom we don't particularly like.)

Yet God desires to show MERCY to everyone — AND He desires that we mirror His MERCY in our dealings with others as well.

Today, as we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ ... let us pray that we might become ministers of God's MERCY in dealing with each other ... let us pray that inasmuch as we have received God's MERCY ... and have experience God's MERCY, we might become more willing ... and more able ... to extend His MERCY to those in our lives ... the people we encounter every day ... when we go forth from this place as messengers of the Good News of Jesus Christ.