

## **Day 107 (Friday, July 3)**

“I believe in God” - *Continued*

### **II. GOD REVEALS HIS NAME**

**203** God revealed himself to his people Israel by making his name known to them. A name expresses a person's essence and identity and the meaning of this person's life. God has a name; he is not an anonymous force. To disclose one's name is to make oneself known to others; in a way it is to hand oneself over by becoming accessible, capable of being known more intimately and addressed personally.

**204** God revealed himself progressively and under different names to his people, but the revelation that proved to be the fundamental one for both the Old and the New Covenants was the revelation of the divine name to Moses in the theophany of the burning bush, on the threshold of the Exodus and of the covenant on Sinai.

#### **The living God**

**205** God calls Moses from the midst of a bush that burns without being consumed: "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."<sup>9</sup> God is the God of the fathers, the One who had called and guided the patriarchs in their wanderings. He is the faithful and compassionate God who remembers them and his promises; he comes to free their descendants from slavery. He is the God who, from beyond space and time, can do this and wills to do it, the God who will put his almighty power to work for this plan.

#### **"I Am who I Am"**

Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you', and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you'. . . this is my name for ever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations."<sup>10</sup>

**206** In revealing his mysterious name, YHWH ("I AM HE WHO IS", "I AM WHO AM" or "I AM WHO I AM"), God says who he is and by what name he is to be called. This divine name is mysterious just as God is mystery. It is at once a name revealed and something like the refusal of a name, and hence it better expresses God as what he is - infinitely above everything that we can understand or say: he is the "hidden God", his name is ineffable, and he is the God who makes himself close to men.<sup>11</sup>

**207** By revealing his name God at the same time reveals his faithfulness which is from everlasting to everlasting, valid for the past ("I am the God of your father"), as for the future ("I will be with you").<sup>12</sup> God, who reveals his name as "I AM", reveals himself as the God who is always there, present to his people in order to save them.

**208** Faced with God's fascinating and mysterious presence, man discovers his own insignificance. Before the burning bush, Moses takes off his sandals and veils his face in the presence of God's holiness.<sup>13</sup> Before the glory of the thrice-holy God, Isaiah cries out: "Woe is me! I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips."<sup>14</sup> Before the divine signs wrought by Jesus, Peter exclaims: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."<sup>15</sup> But because God is holy, he can forgive the man who realizes that he is a sinner before him: "I will not execute my fierce anger. . . for I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst."<sup>16</sup> The apostle John says likewise: "We shall. . . reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything."<sup>17</sup>

**209** Out of respect for the holiness of God, the people of Israel do not pronounce his name. In the reading of Sacred Scripture, the revealed name (YHWH) is replaced by the divine title "LORD" (in Hebrew *Adonai*, in Greek *Kyrios*). It is under this title that the divinity of Jesus will be acclaimed: "Jesus is LORD."

*Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Jesus*

Sincerely,  
Fr. Jim Kaptein