

11<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ex 19:2-6

19:2 "In those days, the Israelites came to the desert of Sinai and pitched camp." This occurred "in the month after their departure from the land of Egypt".

They were encamped in front of Mount Sinai. The exact location of this mountain is uncertain. It is often identified as Jabel Musa \*Mountain of Moses). The size of the mountain is some 7,647 feet. It can be scaled in about one and one-half hours. The adjacent plain coincides with the encampment area at the base of the mountain of God.

19:3 "Moses went up the mountain of God. Then the Lord called to him...."

God is going to establish a permanent relationship with his people, a covenant. Moses is going to be the go-between or mediator of this enduring love relationship between God and the Israelites. God tells Moses what to tell the people.

19:4 They have experienced for themselves how God treated the Egyptians so as to free his people from being their slaves. The ease with which God freed them and brought them to himself is compared to their being transported on eagle wings. God shows his special love and care for them. He has done much for them. He firstly wants them to be aware of his love for them.

19:5 God has chosen the Israelites to be his own. He desires a special love—relationship with them. This is a two-sided deal. They must respond to God's love by listening to him and keeping his commandments. That is how they are to maintain this covenant relationship with God. They will be his special possession. They belong to him. They are dearer to him than all other people. The whole world belongs to God but he chose them before all the others to have this intimate love relationship with him.

19:6 Moses must convey to the Israelites that they are a holy nation, set apart from all the nations of the world, to serve him, their God, as priests. He wants them to dedicate their whole lives to him. He must become the center of their existence so they can offer him ceaseless worship.