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Fr. Danny Murphy – Third Sunday of Lent – 2018

The Third Sunday of Lent. Did you ever wonder how lent began? Well here is a thumbnail sketch of how Lent began. In the early centuries of our church as more and more people wanted to become Christians, a process was designed for them to prepare them for their baptism occurring early on Easter morning. This process culminated with forty days of study, prayer and good works leading up to Easter. The forty days before Easter, for those candidates, was designed so they would have a transformation in their lives before Easter. Those forty days of transformation for them, before Easter became our forty days of Lent, before Easter. So you've got a little sketch of what Lent is. Now, the third Sunday of Lent – it's not too late for you and me to reflect upon what might be the best way for me to spend

the remaining weeks of Lent? Perhaps you might consider going beyond Lenten resolution and experience a Lenten revolution, a transformation in your life like the early Christians had a transformation in their life; to have a transformation in your life that will last far longer than Lent, are you ready for a transformation? Now let's take a look at the scriptures. Today we're going to reflect on only two words, from the first reading, the Book of Exodus tells us that "God rested." You and I are made in the image and likeness of God, right? So, God rested, and you and I should rest as well! In former times, when the sun went down, people shut down, they took time to rest, relax. With the invention of electricity we can be on the go all the time. And today, with smartphones and social media and so much technology right at our fingertips, we can always be engaged, and we might find it difficult to shut down. God rested, and so should we! To rest, is an act of humility. It's saying "God's in charge, not me!" The psalmist puts it this way, Psalm 126, see if this resonates at all with your life: "If the Lord does not build the building, in vain do the laborers labor. If the Lord does not watch over the city, in vain does the watchman keep vigil. In vain is your earlier rising or going to bed later, for the Lord bestows his gifts upon his beloved while they slumber." It's not all up to me. God rested, so should we, but to rest includes naps and sleep, of course, but I think it goes a lot further than that. To rest is to shut down completely, shut down. Not only on the outside, but also on the inside; my body might be at rest, but inside I might be racing – my mind may be always turning. To rest on the outside without resting on the inside isn't really resting because a racing motor makes for a

rough ride in our lives. Ask yourself – do you almost always have your cell phone or some other mobile device somewhere with you or near you so you can almost always be accessible? Jesus wasn't. There are several citations in the scriptures that tell us that Jesus went alone, by himself, in silence and in solitude, away from the crowds, away from the noise, sometimes not even telling anyone where he went so he could be in silence and solitude – he could be at rest. You might want to ask yourself, can I shut it down. Whether we're young or not so young, whether we're working or retired, there are times, I think, when we need to just turn it off! God rested, and so should we! Perhaps we should try to correct the prevalent mentality that we can be seduced into believing that if I'm productive then I'm valuable: the more I do, the more I accomplish, the more esteemed, the more acclaimed I am. When I no longer produce as much, and the day will come when I will no longer produce at all; does that mean I am no longer valuable? If it does then we should just die! But didn't God create us to be human BEINGS not Human DOERS? The scriptures tell us: "Be still and know that I am God." It seems that the scriptures tell us that in order to know who God is, we need to be still! Perhaps we should ask ourselves am I able to be still, not only in my body, but also in my mind and in my heart? Am I able to be still? How comfortable am I with silence? How comfortable am I with solitude? Perhaps you might want to consider, for your transformation this Lent, how can I be still – inwardly as well as outwardly. God rested and so should we!