



THIS IS YOUR SPACE TO STAND UP

REFLECTION POINTS 11 OCTOBER 2020

EXODUS 32: 1-14

“When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron, and said to him, ‘Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ Aaron said to them, ‘Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.’ So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. He took the gold from them, formed it in a mold, [a] and cast an image of a calf; and they said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, ‘Tomorrow shall be a festival to the Lord.’ They rose early the next day, and offered burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel. The Lord said to Moses, ‘Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’” The Lord said to Moses, “I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What are your foundations; the values or institutions on which you build your life?
- What are modern-day idols? How can we resist them?
- How do you remember God’s face in 2020, when church is so different?

In an episode of the podcast “The Bible for Normal People”, founder of the Centre for Action and Contemplation Father Richard Rohr spoke about the nervousness around trusting our own intrinsic experience of God which has meant we’ve created extrinsic authorities that have taken precedence in declaring God’s character and mission. Rohr says a difference between his own Catholic tradition and the Protestant tradition is that each has created a different extrinsic authority – the Catholics in the church and Protestants in the written bible – but both have become forms of idolatry. While this means the institution of Christianity might succeed at controlling its members, we must acknowledge that it comes at the cost of trusting God and God’s mission. Is the bible (or the church) our modern-day Golden Calf?