

1st SUNDAY OF LENT 2021.
CROSSROAD IN DISCERNMENT.

Time and again we need a moment not only as Christians but as human beings to look into ourselves to channel a way forward and make DECISIONS in our lives.

Lent provides us with the opportunity to discern and to make decisions as followers of Christ. It is a time to go back into ourselves. Of all the seasons in the church year, Lent seems to be very striking in keeping most of the traditional practices; **purple colors, ashes, fish on Friday, Stations of the Cross, giving up something.** All these bring up very powerful memories and help keep the traditions of the church alive. Lent helps us go back to our Christian values and practices. It brings a fresh start in our lives.

This is the call we have in our first reading, Noah and all other beings who were saved after the BIG FLOOD had a new beginning after the water subsided. All those who were in the Ark were saved after the floods destroyed everything outside the Ark. With this, God made a covenant with Noah, that He will never destroy the earth with water again.

Water **cleanses** and **saves** and it can also **destroy**. There are so many waters raging and rising in our daily lives. Some of these waters can destroy our normal way of life, they can destroy our **married** life, our **spiritual** life, and our **social communal** life. They can cause destruction even more tragically than in Noah's time.

There are water floods of **greed, drugs, alcoholism, gambling, materialism, selfishness, hatred, revenge, and pornography, even modern technology** can be a great threat if not properly controlled.

The bottom line is, that we need to be in the **ARK**, if we want to be saved. We need that rainbow covenant which stood for ***the new beginning, the new normal***. Where are you as we begin this Lent? We are called to be in that Ark where there is safety and security. This can only be done through the person of our Lord Jesus Christ who has started the journey in these forty days of Lent. How are you going to accompany him?

Remember he had to discern and make a **decision**. He needed the time alone. The devil was after him and he underwent a lot of temptations. Was he to follow ***Satan's suggestions*** or ***God's will?*** In the final analysis God never left him alone, he sent His angels to minister to him during that time when he felt that he had hit the wall. Is God not faithful to you and me whenever we are faced with these decisions in our lives and more so when we are faced with temptations. We need to be in that Ark, the church, for salvation. We need this period of Lent as a ***purification moment and revive*** our ***commitments*** as disciples of Jesus. We need to examine these commitments by the traditional pillars in that ark, ***PRAYER, FASTING AND ALMSGIVING***.

How is your **PRAYER** life?

How many times do you pray?

Are you truly in communion with God in prayer?

Prayer reflects our relationship with God.

Are you going to do **FASTING**?

What are you going to give up this year?

Fasting touches the real self and helps one to discover ones **WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS**.

What of your **ALMSGIVING**. Given so many challenges and opportunities by this pandemic how are you helping those who have been affected by the virus. What of the poor and your parish support. These remind us that we have a duty and responsibility to the poor among us. **ALMSGIVING** helps us shape the social element in our

community.

“By their actions you will know whether they are my followers.” Lent will have a meaning if we would address these issues not only for these forty days but ALWAYS. A good opportunity to reconcile ourselves with ourselves, with God, and with others. We need to face temptation like Jesus and know that the Angels will ALWAYS BE SENT TO MINISTER TO US.