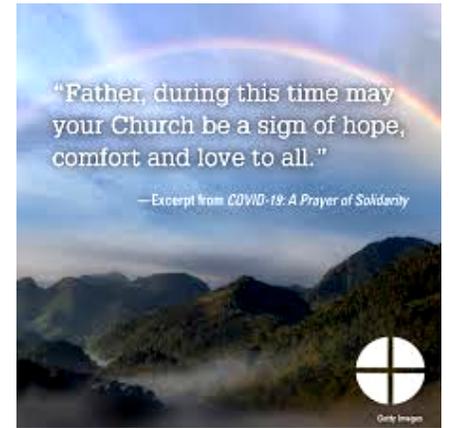


Lenten Reflections for EOHSJ

First Sunday of Lent 2021

Reflection by Rev. David F. Gallardo, KCHS



On a Saturday afternoon, in early November, after a rainy morning, I went out for my daily walk around the Cathedral Plaza. About twenty minutes into my walk the clouds began to clear, and as they cleared the sun began to shine brightly in the afternoon sky. As I looked up to catch a glimpse of the sun I was amazed at what I saw – a sky that was as blue as it could be, scattered white clouds, and in the distance an incredible rainbow! It had been quite some time since I had seen a rainbow so bright and full. Yet, the moment I saw the rainbow in the sky I was immediately reminded of the covenant God made with Noah after the flood.

When we hear the word “Lent,” we tend to think about a period of forty days to acknowledge that we are sinners and are in need of God’s mercy and forgiveness. But Lent is more than this. Lent is also a period of time to remember God’s covenant of faithfulness and love.

As we begin the first full week of Lent today, let us take a look at the First Reading proclaimed at Mass taken from the ninth chapter of the Book of Genesis (9:8-15). In this section of Genesis, God speaks to Noah and his sons saying: *“See, I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you...that never again shall bodily creatures be destroyed by the waters of a flood... I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.”* The covenant God entered into with Noah assured him and his descendants, as it assures us that He will never destroy humanity again and will always remain faithful. God chooses to be loving, compassionate, and merciful with us, despite our failures, weaknesses, and sinfulness.

During the Season of Lent, the Spirit of God leads us into the stillness of our hearts to be renewed in our relationship with God and with one another. In the stillness of our hearts we acknowledge before God that we are sinners who have fallen short of keeping His commandments and Jesus’ command to love one another as He loves us. Once we have acknowledged our sinfulness, we humbly ask the Lord for His mercy and forgiveness in order to begin anew our relationship with Him and with each other. But, if our relationships, both with God and one another, are to be renewed, there is still something more to acknowledge: God’s covenant to never destroy humanity again and His promise of always remaining faithful to us.

Four days have now passed since the beginning of Lent. If we are finding it difficult to enter into the spirit of this season of penance and reconciliation, it is not too late to begin. All we need to do is spend time today and every day during Lent to recall first and foremost God’s covenant of faithfulness and love. Recalling His covenant makes it easier to acknowledge and confess our sins because His covenant assures us that no matter what we have done to sever our relationship with Him and one another, He will always remain faithful, loving, compassionate, and merciful. Just as the rainbow is a reminder of God’s covenant of faithfulness with Noah and his descendants, so may the Season of Lent be first and foremost a reminder of God’s faithfulness and unconditional love.

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