

Noah and the Pandemic

I was thinking about the old testament reading yesterday and thought of poor old Noah. First, he builds this huge ark amidst criticism and ridicule from his neighbours. He then tries to warn them of what was coming but no one would listen. So, he sets off as the rains come and he watches his community covered in water. The sadness he must have felt and the anger that they did not listen. But there he is with his family and all the animals bouncing up and down on the waters of the flood. All he wants is to find land and get out of the ark. Think about it! The smell alone would be enough to go searching for land!

After many months he sent out the dove to see if it could land on dry ground but it kept returning to the ark. Each week Noah sent it out again and finally it did not return so Noah knew that the waters had receded and soon they would be free to leave the boat they had lived on for almost a year. But that is not the end of the story. The best is yet to come. God speaks to Noah and places a rainbow in the sky as a sign of the new covenant He is making with all people "never again will flood waters kill all living creatures, never again will I destroy the earth." God is giving all people freedom to make choices but he clearly lets them know that with freedom comes responsibility.

We like Noah have wandered for a year waiting for the pandemic to end - trapped in our little bubbles. We keep sending out feelers and listening to our politicians hoping we will be set free to worship in person again, to travel again, to see family and friends, to shop. We see glimmers of hope and wonder if it will last or if another variant will take it all away. And like Noah we have learned that freedom brings responsibility. To be free we have to wear our masks and keep our distance and stay home. More importantly we have to take care of each other and keep connected with family and friends in new ways. We have to shop local and give more. We have to pray and remember that God hears. She knows our anguish and enters into our loneliness and isolation and worry. That is our hope, knowing we are not alone, knowing we are loved no matter what and choosing to respond. How do you respond? Something to think about as you journey through Lent.

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