

Lent 2A 2017

Go Forth!

In today's first reading God says to Abraham: "Go forth from the land of your father's house to a land I will show you, and I will make of you a great nation." With this promise the story of salvation begins. Abraham will become the father of a great nation, and from this people will come the Messiah, Jesus the Christ. But before this can happen, Abraham must believe and trust in the promise of God. Before Abraham can inherit God's blessing, he must go forth from the land of his ancestors.

Consider Abraham's dilemma. He had lived his whole life in the land of his ancestors, a land where he was comfortable and at home. But now God was calling him to leave everything he knew and to go forth to a land he had never seen. Abraham was faced with the greatest decision of his life. *Should he go forth* from the land he knew to a land he had never seen? *Should he go forth* and trust that God would fulfill the promise or should he remain in the land of his ancestors? *Should he go forth and obey God* or remain where he was, comfortable and at home?

How tempting it must have to ignore God's call! *How easy* it would have been for Abraham to stay in the familiar land and surroundings he knew. *How easy* it would have been to hold on to what he had rather than to trust in God's promise. But Abraham did not cling to the past. He did not hesitate. In a moment of faith and trust in the God whom he could not see, Abraham went forth from the land of his ancestors, and because he did the story of salvation began.

Lent is our time to go forth from the place we are living a new place that will change and transform us, a place where we will experience the promise of God. Lent is a time to respond to the promise of God so that we can enter ever more deeply into the life of Christ.

Where are you living? I don't mean Simsbury, Tarrifville, Granby, or Canton. I mean where is the place from which you must go forth if you are to live with God? All of us are in a place from which we must go forth if we are to meet God. Perhaps you are in **the land of anger and resentment**, a place where you are consumed by the grudges you nurture every day. Perhaps you are in **the land of doubt and skepticism**, because you refuse to believe and trust in the promises of God. Perhaps you are in **the land of consumerism**, consumed by what you have and want. Perhaps you are in **the land of addiction**, unable to free yourself from those addictions of drugs, alcohol, or pornography that enslave you. Perhaps you are in **the land of "Me,"** where you focus on yourself alone.

There are will other places as well from which we must go forth: **the land of greed, the land of judgment, the land of resentment and I will not forgive you.** All of us are in a place from which we must go forth this Lent if we hope to enter the place God has prepared for us.

The Christian life is a journey to another place. We are always moving forth from the place where we are to the place God is calling us. And unless we go forth from where we are to that new place, we will not enter the life of God, the resurrection life that God has prepared for us in Jesus Christ. So go forth this Lent. Leave that place where you are living. Go forth to that new place God has prepared for you. For only if we go forth from the place that enslaves us will we enter the promise rest that God has in store for you.