

## 02/18/18 ..... 1 Lent B

-- Many of you have probably heard that our Life Teen group is planning a trip to the Ark Encounter in Kentucky. This impressive exhibit has a full-scale replica of Noah's Ark based on the dimensions given in the Bible as they interpret them.

-- As I said, it's impressive. But the account of Noah and the flood was put in the Bible for a purpose that was not primarily historical. It was there to teach people a lesson. Many would say it was also to respond to pagan stories from the Middle East (esp. Babylon) about a great flood.

-- Our first reading comes from the end of that story. In Genesis, God's makes a first covenant is with *all* of humanity, not just one nation. God promises his everlasting protection. Destruction came about because of human sin, but God will undo it.

-- St. Peter picks up on the theme of the flood when he addresses newly baptized Christians. Water causes destruction when it's in the form of a flood (just think of Houston this past fall). But water also gives new life, for we know our physical lives can't be sustained very long without it.

-- There's a sense in which each of us ought to use this Lenten season as a "mini-catechumenate" to renew the commitment we first made (or was made for us by our parents) at Baptism.

-- To put it another way, we would do well to use this season as a type of retreat. Of course, we're not going to take off work for 40 days, or leave our families. And few of us have the luxury of remaining silent that long.

-- But there are other ways to engage in retreat. Set aside some time each day to be quiet and think of the significance of your baptism. Perhaps you may want to use the daily videos from Dynamic Catholic for Lent. Each video is only 4-5 minutes long, but it gives great meat for reflection and making progress.

-- Even if you don't have time for daily Mass or a holy hour, all of us can find 10-15 minutes for quiet prayer and reflection. The time of day will

vary because of our particular schedules. But all of us can find it, if we make it a priority.

-- Jesus spent 40 days in the Judean wilderness in preparation for his mission. Priests and ministers take significant time for preparation, and every priest is expected to make a retreat yearly.

-- While making a retreat may be a good idea for many people, it usually takes a lot of planning. All of us, though, can “retreat” for short period each day to be with the Lord and to renew our baptismal commitment.

-- It just takes making it a priority, just as we might do for exercise, study, reading or other activities. That discipline may well be the Lenten discipline we are called to exercise this year.

-- When we make that commitment, we will gradually make progress in the spiritual life. We will see the rainbow of God’s love, as we encounter the Lord of love touching us personally.

-- In order to discover that God is truly present in our lives, we have to take time to look. This Lenten season, may we take some time each day to seek the face of God. If we open our hearts, we won’t have to look far.

-- May we pray for those preparing to come into God’s life through Baptism and full communion in the Catholic Church. They seek God’s strength to withstand temptation, and so should we.

-- As we do so, the rainbow of God’s love and mercy will envelop our hearts and souls. And our Lenten discipline will be well worth the effort.