



Immaculate Conception
Church

Homily for the First Sunday of Lent
Year B 2015

*“Pitch within. Pitch without.
300 cubits long. 50 cubits wide.
30 cubits high.”*

Well, the purpose was to escape a world gone insane with a pursuit of pleasure, a steady diet of violence and the infection of prejudice and hatred where the dignity of a person was overlooked. An individual's worth was not in who they were but in how they could be used.

And Jesus walked into the desert. He also needed to get away. He needed time to put behind him the sinfulness and greed, the self-centeredness and violence of his own world. He needed to be alone with God. He needed God to feed his heart. Jesus needed to become immersed in the art of God's kingdom. And so in two very powerful readings we discover the meaning of Lent. A time to walk away from the world in order to discover that if we are to build God's kingdom then we must become reflections of the compassion of Christ who sought out the marginalized of our Church and our society and reinstated them as full and beloved members of our Church and our world. To become like Christ is to direct our compassion to those who are pushed aside, thought less of, looked down upon and are the victims of prejudice and hatred.

We live in a world that each one of us should want to run away from. We live in world of extraordinary violence where people are beheaded and burned to death because they do not uphold the beliefs and way of living of ISIS. We live in a world where people are more interested in the air pressure in a football than in the stark poverty of those who are homeless and poor, unwanted and unloved. We live in a society that would rather see 50 Shades of Grey than the powerful rainbow of God's love that is so beautifully spoken about in today's first reading.

Many would say that we cannot change that world. Perhaps. But while no one of us can change the wider world in which we live, each one of us can change the parameters of our own individual lives. We can do that by looking inside our hearts and discovering that the way to live is not what the world teaches. Rather the way to live is to discover the art of building God's kingdom by living God's love in each and every action of our lives.

Jesus came out of the desert and Noah left the ark. In both cases their lives became reflections of the presence and action of God. For the kingdom of God is always at hand. It is in our hearts and beating powerfully in our souls. The kingdom of God is found when we can learn that it is possible to change how we live in order to reflect to others how God asks us to live. And that is how we change the world. It is the Season of Lent. As we take this time to sacrifice and to pray. We beg God to let this Lenten Season end with our hearts on fire...on fire with that love of Christ reaching out to the world around us. And together may we build that kingdom of God in our world today.