

Dear Parishioners,

When my niece, Mary Grace, was born her parents had an artist friend come and paint a scene from Noah's Ark in her bedroom. This is a favorite Bible story for children as well as for adults. Children love the colors of creation, the shapes of animals, and most of all they love the idea that God gave a rainbow as a sign that he would never destroy the world again. To this day, when I see a rainbow after a storm I find joy in the promise God has given us.

This wonderful story in *Genesis* is known as a "de-creation story." At first God created the world perfectly, it was what he had intended it to be. But once the humans started using that one gift that made them look just like God, free will, it became obvious to God that he had to start over, make a new plan. He liked the original idea so much, though, that he decided to take the best of the humans and animals, and let the rest die in the waters of the flood. With only the very best left alive their offspring would carry on the traditions of holiness and love. They would be faithful, they would never stray. It is interesting, though, that there are other de-creation stories, even in the book of *Genesis*. It didn't take very long for the humans to choose sin again.

So, what do we make of the idea that we live in a covenant relationship with God? Biblically, a covenant is an agreement made between two partners of unequal status. It has to be that way. One person has to be more powerful than the other. Usually these covenants were made in the blood of animals. So, when God made a covenant with Abraham, or Moses, the lesser of the two partners, they would sacrifice animals and the blood would be poured out onto the people. Blood was seen as the source of life because there can be no life without it. So, when an agreement is made between the two unequal partners then they live on an even playing field, one no longer has power over the other because neither partner is allowed to break

the agreement. They must live together marked by the sign of the blood.

Let's consider, for a moment, the covenant relationship we share today as Catholic Christians. The blood that is poured out for us is the blood of Jesus Christ which we then drink in the Eucharistic feast. His life of eternal salvation makes us one with him. His death becomes our life. Our lives are then transformed so that we can live as members of his body in the world.

Our world is in the midst of a tempest now. We see catastrophe everywhere we look. For some people it seems as though the world is falling apart all around us, and we ought to be afraid because no one knows what is going to happen. Who will fix things? Who will make life better? Who is going to make creation what it is supposed to be? As Eucharistic people we know it is Christ. Knowing that we live as partners of a covenant in his blood, Christ works through us.

As we begin this Lenten season it is good for us to consider the loving relationship we share as members of the Body of Christ. If this relationship does not matter to us, then we have no reason to hope that the kingdom of heaven will be a reality for us because we are all alone in this world. If this covenant does matter to us, we will repent of our sins, take up our own crosses each day, and make the commitment to follow him. And when we do this we will find that life is easy; it has purpose because we live in partnership with One who has given us life.

In joyful hope,

Fr. Tim Seigel