

Pastor's Letter

Feb. 18, 2024—1st Sunday of Lent

Dear Church Family,

The part of the church where the pews are, where all the people sit, is called the nave. This word comes from the Latin word for ship. The connection between a church nave and a ship is more apparent in traditional church architecture where the building is long and narrow and has a vaulted ceiling that kind of looks like an upside-down boat, like at our own St. Joseph's church. The connection of the church to ships goes deeper than just appearances, though.

Our first reading is from the story of Noah's ark. God has brought Noah and his family through the waters of the flood which God sent as a punishment for human sinfulness. He did so by commanding Noah to build a ship that would save its passengers, animal and human, so that there could be a new beginning, which starts with God's covenant with Noah to never again destroy all life. As St. Peter reminds us in our second reading, this is a foreshadowing of God's work in Jesus Christ to save us from sin through baptism into our Lord's death and resurrection. He says, "Put to death in the flesh, he was brought to life in the Spirit. In it he also went to preach to the spirits in prison, who had once been disobedient while God patiently waited in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water. This prefigured baptism, which saves you now. It is not a removal of dirt from the body but an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him."

Christ's church is the ship that brings us through the storm of trials and temptations that we all face in life to the kingdom of God that he proclaimed. It's in the church that the graces of the sacraments come to us and bring healing when we fail and strength to overcome. As we enter the season of Lent, a season in which we confront our weakness and rejoice in God's mercy we do so as a church family gathered and sheltered by our loving heavenly Father. Let's support each other with our prayers and encouragement as we voyage together on this journey of growth in faith, hope and love.

Blessings,

Fr. Scott