

2nd Sunday in Lent Year A

I don't know about you, but I was so hurt by the news that Jean Vanier had six credible accusations of sexual abuse and it seems that he was a predator of some of the women whom he directed. If you don't know who Jean Vanier was, he is a recently deceased Canadian, the son of the one-time Governor General and founder of the community L'Arche. L'Arche has apparently 120 communities around the world and in their communities, they live together with handicap people and give them a home. Some considered him a living saint. He wrote books, and inspired many people through talks and personal contact. It was very sad for me to hear the news. Not that I think people can't fail, I know we all can, but what happened? Is any one safe from being a wreck? I honestly at the time felt hopeless. Then there is the whole coronavirus thing. As of March 7th, we had 57 confirmed cases in Canada, though no deaths as of yet. I guess it is bad, however, you are still far more likely to die of the flu. Some 3,500 Canadians die of the flu each year and close to 1,800 die in motor vehicle accidents. Over 4,000 people died in our medical assisted dying program last year and no one seems to panic about that.

It seems to me that we are still not responding in faith to these crises. It is like we don't believe God is the answer anymore. I hear in some countries they even shut down the churches, however, the bars are still open. People will take the chance to get a disease in order to drink but not to worship God. They seem to be only human responses. We don't get down and pray and fast and do penance. We are still looking to our human resources to save us and I feel they will not. I was inspired by the First Reading where Abram is told to move from a place that is familiar to him, away from his family and security, and start a new life. It seems to me this is a call in Lent. We are called to be uprooted from our sources, from the things that we think is our security, and cast off to a new country of faith. I am not downplaying the importance of human things such as precautions and protocols, God gave us an ability to do this type of thing and we should. But it won't save us. Only God will save us. I believe more people will be hurt by the fear of the coronavirus than by the virus itself, as long as we keep responding in fear. I think the abuse in the Church will keep continuing on until we respond by faith and say, "God, you have to save us from this." In the Second Reading, we hear: *Join me in suffering for the Gospel*. During this time of Lent we are called to pray and fast, so why not pray and fast for the mess we are in? I believe only God can save us. We got here because we did not trust Him and we won't get out until we let Him save and heal His Church.

Like Abraham, we are called to see what we are rooted in. Is it God or is it the world? We know that a tree or flower is affected by the water and soil it is in. We are the same way. If we are living in fear right now we can be assured that we are rooted in the world. Even Health Canada says if you are getting frightened by the coronavirus you should turn off your news source and get away from it for awhile. This Lent we are called to give up the things that we rely on and return to rely more on God, to thank Him and trust Him for His plan and how He will clean up and heal the mess we are in.

I will leave you with two questions.

What are we rooted in - God or the world?

What is something that you and I can do - some fasting and prayer - to join in suffering for the Church and invite God to heal the mess we are in?

