

Lenten Reflection

Wednesday, First Week of Lent March 8, 2017



By Associate Pat Montgomery

A swirl of thoughts and impression vied for my attention as I pondered and prepared today's Lenten Reflection: The story of Jonah and Nineveh is told in the Hebrew Scriptures, in the Christian Bible, and in the Qu'ran. Nineveh is on the outskirts of Mosul in northern Iraq, an area we hear about frequently today. The Adad Gate in the wall around Nineveh, built around 700 BC and reconstructed in the 20th Century, was destroyed by ISIS last May (2016).

The Lord directed Jonah: "Arise, go to Nineveh ... and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before me." (Jonah 1:2) "Man and beast alike must be covered with sackcloth and call loudly to God; they all must turn from their evil way and from the violence of their hands." (Jonah 3:8) But Jonah ran away from the Presence of God; he boarded a ship bound for Tarsus, far from Israel; an unwelcomed ride in a gigantic fish's belly later rendered Jonah more willing to accept his charge. The Lord asked: "And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left?" (Jonah 4:11)

One sign carried in the Women's March on Washington on January 21, 2017 spelled it out strongly: **Be the Change You Want To Make.** I conclude from all this swirl and these meanderings that I am called to change today's Nineveh – aka 'my world.' How? I ask. And the answer comes swiftly: by heeding and living out loud the Vision of the Sisters of Divine Providence; in particular, that segment which shows the way:

"Therefore,
we will cherish our intercultural and international ties;
we will strive for right relationships with all;
we will courageously risk being marginalized;
we will live and promote every form of non-violence;
we will generously share even in the midst of scarcity."

Running away and playing the ostrich is mighty tempting, especially when I realize the enormity of the evils amongst us -- from the vulgarity, intolerance, and hatred to the unspeakable acts of violence, to the treatment of refugees and immigrants, to the conditions of poverty which are a lived fact for the majority of people on this planet.

By simply and consciously fulfilling the directives in our Vision statement, I – in unison with my Sisters and Associates -- may succeed in affecting change -- preferably with the same results that Jonah witnessed, and preferably without having to endure a fish episode.

