



A Reflection on the Second Week of Lent
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Where Are We Going?

Where are we going? I'm not sure I like it. What seemed like a walk in the park has become a trek through the forest. What seemed like a good idea is now a complicated, heart-wrenching transformation.

Abraham and Sarah appear in our Lenten journey this week. They're asked to make a journey to an unknown land that God will give them. They're promised heirs even though they're old and barren. And off they go, in faith, trusting the word and the promise of God. Theirs is definitely not a walk in the park. It is a long journey with twists and turns, misunderstandings and failures. And it seems to take a long time for God to keep this un-believable promise and give them a whole nation of heirs. Eventually they arrive at the land that was promised. Eventually Sarah gives birth. And we, their heirs, have been telling their story ever since.

The real destination of Jesus' journey starts to appear this week. He has left the desert and begun his ministry to proclaim and make visible God's reign. Heir of Sarah and Abraham, Jesus is the covenant promise walking among his people. He teaches and he heals. Others, especially those who are poor, marginalized and vulnerable, are drawn to him. They like where he's going with all these wonderful words and healing deeds. They want what he seems to be promising.

Not everybody likes what he's doing, though. He is definitely threatening the status quo. He is proposing a way of life, a system of values, that would radically change the structure of the culture. His is a journey of offering, of love, of healing. Unthinkable propositions for those who would hold onto power and control.

And it will only get worse.

The disciples get glimpses of the glory that is in Jesus. They see how those who are in need flock to him. They hear his words that inspire and challenge. They sense that he is somehow the presence of the holy in their midst. They also begin to see that his journey will not be an easy one and may end up in disaster.

Do they stay or do they go? It all depends on faith. Do they believe he is who he says he is; and if so, do they trust his word? Are they, like Abraham and Sarah, willing to go the length of the journey? Or, do they want to stay where they are; where things are good and everybody's okay?



Lenten Reflections

In a few weeks, we'll know the answer to these questions. But for now, it is enough to know that beginning a journey—responding to a call—will always be more complicated than it seems or that we would like.

Those who serve in Catholic health care know this only too well. What had once seemed a good idea has perhaps become one problem after another. Familiar structures need to change with the times. This is not a comfortable place where we find ourselves.

Where *are* we going?

A more important question in this Lenten season is: “Who is going with us?” We cannot make this journey alone. It is vital for us to remember that our colleagues go with us. Those who believe in the call go with us. Those who are poor and vulnerable and lost in their own journeys go with us. Founders, ancestors, forerunners go with us. The loving God, in whose mercy and love we dwell, goes with us.

The journey, then, is safe. It is holy. It is of the heart. We are called to this journey. Lent reminds us that we are blessed on our way.

The Catholic Health Association would like to thank Jon Sarta for allowing us to use his music from the albums “The Catholic Music Project Volume V: Lent,” and “The Catholic Music Project Volume VI: Easter” for the podcast version of this reflection. His music can be obtained from mljmusic.com.