



3rd SUNDAY of LENT ***YEAR C – March 24, 2019***

In a place called Massah, the Israelites quarreled among themselves about how they had to suffer at the hands of their enemies, and they challenged Moses with this question, "Is God really in our midst or not?"

It is similar to the question we all heard after the events of 9/11 here in our own country, and every time the atrocities of war or terrorism raise their ugly head as happened recently in New Zealand. Where is God in all this? The answer is right before us if we look with the eyes of faith. God is in every man, woman and child who gives aid and comfort to those who are affected by the sins of those who don't care about how they hurt other people.

As I have often said before, "Sometimes, God sends angels, mostly he sends us." Jesus tells us the weeds and the wheat will continue to grow together until harvest time, but there will be a judgment at the end of it all. The judgment will be made by God and God does not need a jury.

It's easy to see what needs to be changed in the lives of others, but that's not our job. Our job is to see what needs to be changed in our own lives. Every year, the season of Lent reminds us and gives us time to do that. Some people say it isn't possible to change but Jesus says that's not true. He says we all have the capacity to change, even the worst among us. He goes on to say in the Gospel today, "If we do not change we will perish." He doesn't say we might perish, he says we will perish. You can almost hear him say, "Any questions?"

The Greek word in the Gospel today is "METANOIATE". It's a command. It means to reform, reshape, refashion our lives. It is the first word out of the mouth of John the Baptist as he prepared the way of our Lord. It is the first word out of the mouth of Jesus as he began his public ministry. It means reform, reshape, refashion our lives in accord with the teachings of Jesus. We have the capacity change. We also have the capacity to remain in sin. By God's design, the human will can say no to God.

When it comes to change, it's not our job to change our spouses; that's their job. It's not our job to change our children; that's their job. It's not our job to change our parents; that's their job. It's not our job to change anyone; that's their job.

It's our job to change ourselves. It's our job to become more like Jesus every day.

Lent is the season for that kind of change. Consider the words of Cardinal John Henry Newman in the picture to the right. Change is a part of life. For a few moments in silence, reflect on the things in your life you need to change. And then recall the challenge from Jesus, "Be Perfect..." (Matthew 5:48)

