

WHAT WE NEED TO SURVIVE (MK 1:9-16; Gen 9:8-17)

Given by the Rev. Corinne Hodges

Sun., March 1, 2009, St. John of the Cross, Bristol

- I. Hospital visit
 - A. Can go days without food
 - B. Cannot go without water
 - C. Water is essential to our survival

- II. Water is an important element in each of our three readings today
 - A. OT water destroys creation—destructive force that washes earth clean
 - B. 1 Peter—flood as prefiguration of baptism
 1. Saves and gives life
 2. Does not remove dirt, but gives clean conscience
 3. Wiped free of sin
 - C. Gospel
 1. Jesus baptized in Jordan and begins ministry
 2. But then sent by Spirit to dry, barren desert where there is no water

- III. Water is not only essential for life, but also a life source
 - A. When scientists look at other planets for an indication of whether there has been or could be life, one of the first things they look for is presence of water
 - B. Friend who returned from Israel
 1. Spent several days in desert, no water anywhere
 2. Dead Sea there was water, so salty nothing could live in it
 3. Interesting thing beginning to happen around Dead Sea
 - a. Sinkholes developing—pits filled with fresh water
 - b. Signs of new life in ways that one would never expect

- IV. All of us have spent time in the desert (spiritual desert)
 - A. Harsh and hard times when conditions in our life change and rock our faith
 - B. Dry times when we've thirsted/hungered for God's presence; feel empty, that our well has run dry
 - C. Loneliness of the long stretches when we feel we are alone, even God does not hear us cry
 - D. Most of us would never enter these dry patches on our own

- V. Lent asks us to do exactly that—enter the desert on our own free will
 - A. "Footprints" discovery
 - B. In harsh conditions, we realize what we need most in order to survive
 - C. Stripped of so much of what used to make up the scenery of our lives, we see things more simply and perhaps clearly

- D. More than ever, we recognize our dependence on God
- E. Enter hoping that after 40 days of reflection, we will have discovered God's life giving source, we will draw near and enter Easter with a new awareness and new energy
- F. No longer is the well empty, our lips parched
- G. We've drawn from the life-source and found that God can indeed sustain us

- VI. Is God working a new thing in our lives and world right now? Will new life rise up in a time when so much seems to be drying up?
- A. We have to believe yes. God is always at work
 - B. After all, think of Jesus alone in the desert for 40 days and nights without water and food...he made it
 - C. Think of the Israelites exiled in the desert for 40 years...they made it
 - D. And Noah, sending out that dove waiting each time for the waters to calm and land to appear—he must have wondered when the storms would cease and he would feel safe and secure again
 - E. We have to believe that with God's help, we will not only make it through Lent, but also the tides of the times
 - F. It may not happen in the time or form that we would imagine, but even in these dry, barren times, God will save us...and new life will appear again.
 - G. What do we need to survive? Water yes, food maybe, but most of all we need God.