

**DEVOTIONS FOR LENT**  
**MARCH 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**Neighbors**

**Bible Reading**

**Jonah 1** <sup>5</sup>Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god. They threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold of the ship and had lain down, and was fast asleep. <sup>6</sup>The captain came and said to him, “What are you doing sound asleep? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps the god will spare us a thought so that we do not perish.”

**Context**

Jonah sleeps or hides (perhaps like the child who fakes slumber.) Unlike Jesus who immediately clamors out of slumber to calm the sea, Jonah ignores the situation. The captain, a pagan cries out with the same words used by God to initially call Jonah, “Arise, call...”

The pagan sailors recognize the divine source of the storm, yet Jonah refuses or denies, even though it is his God. Again, paralleling the New Testament we discover the gentiles and Samaritans are receptive to God’s revelation in Jesus while his own people and followers fail the test of faith.

**Devotion**

The old cliché “We are all in the same boat” can be no truer than here. The sailors recognize the need for Jonah to recognize and call for help from his God. We live among our neighbors needing to seek the common good. We once again travel to the New Testament remembering the infamous question, “Who is our neighbor?”

At 5am every morning in Iringa Tanzania, the speaker blared with the morning Muslim prayers. They were a minority in Iringa. When I asked one my teaching colleagues about the disturbance he corrected me with, “That is what we do to accommodate freedom of religion.”

**Reflection Questions**

Why do you think Jonah would not admit his God might be responsible when the pagans clearly recognized it?

Who should we be specifically praying for?

**Prayer**

Merciful Christ, we confess we do not often admit or trust the power your name has in this life. Forgive us. In Jesus name. Amen.