

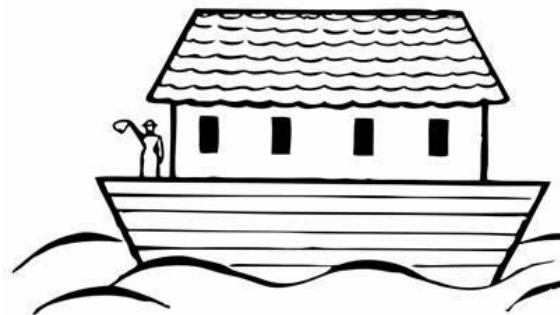
Women of Faith: The Ark of Hopefulness



In Lent we are reminded of God's covenant with earth and Noah's radical endeavour to save the life of the planet by building an ark.

(Lent 1 Year B Genesis 9.8-17)

We know his wife and sons supported and accompanied him in this venture, though his wife is never named. Perhaps Mr Noah



addressed her by her own name? God would know her by name and presumably reassured her that her husband's crazy project would work! She was a woman of faith. If the project followed the usual pattern Noah would be project manager, his sons would be construction engineers and Mrs Noah would get to be in charge of boarding, hospitality, accommodation, provisions, meals, first-aid, laundry, ark-cleaning and even bed-time stories! She would go largely unnoticed except by those whose discomfort was eased by her nursing and care.

Logic defies the plot – it would be some super-sized cruise ship to accommodate every species on the planet, and a seed bank for the plants. However, the story is a timeless one which touches us every time a rainbow arcs the sky. It helps us to grasp the measure of God's love for the planet and to our role as assistants in caring for it. It helps to alert us to the Love which expends all for our salvation. When our sea levels are rising alarmingly, and we are skilled enough to rectify the trend, God must despair when we fail to respond (as Noah did) to the call to 'do something radical'. God's love is boundless as the ocean, if we do but heed.

Lent calls us to repent – perhaps of our reticence to get involved with action on climate change and environmental trauma. Lent also calls us 'follow Jesus' down the challenging path – carrying our cross of responsibility for the generations to follow ours. Let us pray for the work of MU in upholding the 5th Mark of Mission – to Treasure Creation. A call to the ark of hopefulness.

O Love, that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee.
I give thee back the life I owe,
that in thine ocean depths
its flow might richer, fuller be.