

One of the recurring themes of the Old Testament is that of journey;

Abram called to leave his homeland in Ur and travel to Canaan.

Moses called to journey with God's people from slavery in Egypt to the Land of Promise.

Jesus told stories of journeys – the young man who demanded his inheritance of his father and travelled off – who later journeyed back in penitence to experience the extravagant love of his father

Journeys into exile and slavery

Journeys to the Land of Promise, to the place of renewal and forgiveness.

Our 3rd Eucharistic prayer reminds us that “when we turned away you did not reject us. You came to meet us in your son, welcomed us as your children and prepared a table where we might feast with you

In our own day description of the Church as a pilgrim people

We make our journey not just as individuals but as a community.

At different stages on their journey of faith the people of Israel were called to repent, to a time of reflection of where they were as a people before God.

The prophet Micah made such a call to the people of his day:

"With what shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?

Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,

with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"
He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:6-8

This is a journey not just of an individual but as a community. It is a journey with God and towards God but also with one another in which we encourage one another, in which we support and encourage one another.

It is appropriate that the 31st Dail has met for the first time on the first day of Lent. Now that the election is over and all the rhetoric that goes with that, it is time for us as a community and as a nation to reflect on where we are, what are our aspirations as a people? To what, to whom do we look as reach for those aspirations? Are we to be driven by political dogma, sectional interest – or are we prepared to allow our spiritual heritage to inform. Over the course of our reflections in Lent we will be reflecting on this with particular reference to that challenge of Micah:

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?