



AMDG
1ST SUNDAY IN LENT
YEAR B
18TH FEBRUARY 2018



Your ways, Lord, are faithfulness and love

OPENING PRAYER

Grant, almighty God, through the yearly observances of holy Lent,
that we may grow in understanding
of the riches hidden in Christ
and by worthy conduct pursue their effects.

As we begin Lent, we are invited to follow Jesus into the silence of the wilderness and join with him in prayer and fasting.

Throughout Lent, the Old Testament readings guide us through the history of our salvation. This Sunday we begin with God's Covenant with Noah and his descendants (*First Reading*). The rainbow in the sky is a reminder of that loving Covenant, which foreshadows the promises God will later make to Abraham.

The first letter of St Peter (*Second Reading*) teaches that just as the waters of the flood in Noah's day led to a new life and Covenant with God, the waters of our baptism lead to new life in Christ.

In the *Gospel*, after Jesus has been baptised and received the Holy Spirit, he is drawn by the Spirit into the desert. After forty days of fasting and testing in the wilderness, he immediately returns to Galilee and begins to spread the Good News, calling people to repent and turn back to God.

The story of both God's Covenant with Noah and today's *Psalm* would have been well known to Jesus. Perhaps we can imagine him praying the psalm and taking comfort from its words:

"Lord make me know your ways.

Lord teach me your paths. Make me walk in your truth."

Let this be our prayer, too, as we begin our Lenten journey.

May Jesus be our guide as we learn to follow his path to salvation.

We begin as Jesus did by entering into silence ...

FIRST READING: GENESIS 9: 8–15

God spoke to Noah and his sons, “See, I establish my Covenant with you, and your descendants after you; also with every living creature to be found with you, birds, cattle and every wild beast with you: everything that came out of the ark, everything that lives on the earth. I establish my Covenant with you: no thing of flesh shall be swept away again by the waters of the flood. There shall be no flood to destroy the earth again.

God said, “Here is the sign of the Covenant I make between myself and you and every living creature with you for all generations: I set my bow in the clouds and it shall be a sign of the Covenant between me and the earth. When I gather the clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the Covenant between myself and you and every living creature of every kind. And so the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all things of flesh.

Aware of how I am feeling, I come to prayer just as I am, and place myself before God. I let my mind find stillness, and imagine God looking upon me with love and kindness.

I read the story of Noah with fresh eyes and a curious mind, asking God to help me in my prayer.

God makes a Covenant with his people.

What is God promising me?

How do I respond ?

God is making the same Covenant with all living things.

What is my relationship to creation and all of God's creatures?

God uses the beauty of the rainbow as a reminder of his love for creation.

What images, places or aspects of nature remind me of God's love?

I may like to use my imagination to explore with all of my senses the scenes that come to mind, and see God's love filling each one.

How do I feel now?

I find my own words of thanks to God and close my prayer by saying
Glory be to the Father ...

GOSPEL: MARK 1: 12–15

The Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. “The time has come,” he said, “and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.”

I go to my place of prayer, finding a time and place where I can be alone before God. I bring myself to silence and inner stillness as best I can.

I may notice distractions and how my mind often wanders.

Rather than struggle with my thoughts, I notice them with kindness, and bring my attention to my breath or to some visual focus of prayer.

I read the text slowly, perhaps initially focusing on the first paragraph.

Jesus was drawn by the Spirit into the desert after he was baptised.

Where is the Spirit drawing me this Lent?

What do I need to let go of in order to draw closer to God?

I use my imagination to enter the wilderness with Jesus, seeing him alone and tested.

I ask Jesus how he felt facing these challenges.

How does this make me feel?

I might choose to reflect on the times when my faith has felt tested.

Maybe I have been too self-reliant and not always placed my trust in God ...?

I share this with the Lord.

Jesus was looked after by angels. Who are the people who have been like angels for me? I thank God for their help.

I may now want to read the second paragraph. I imagine seeing and hearing Jesus calling me personally to repent. “[*My name*], the time has come ...”

How do I respond to his invitation?

When I feel ready, I slowly close my prayer by telling the Lord of my own commitment to repentance. I listen to him.

I ask Jesus to be with me and guide me through these coming weeks of Lent.

I finish by making a prayerful sign of the cross.

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

God spoke ... "See, I establish my Covenant with you."

First Reading

Lord, make me know your ways.

Lord, teach me your paths.

Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:

for you are God my saviour.

Psalm

"The time has come and the Kingdom of God is close at hand.

Repent, and believe the Good News."

Gospel Acclamation

This week's texts if you want to reflect further

Genesis 9: 8-15; Psalm 24 (25); 1 Peter 3: 18-22; Mark 1:12-15



The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness ...



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