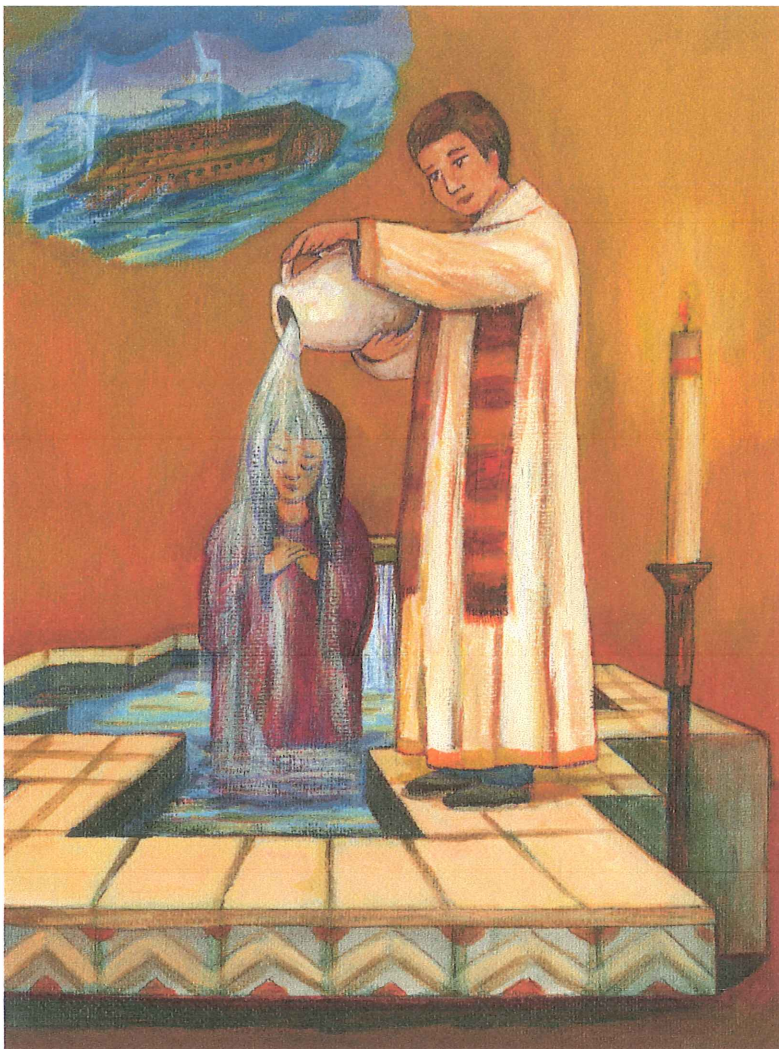


FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT



Washed Clean

Compassionate God,
whose promise of love spans
all generations,
rouse our hearts to hear your Word
and teach us to act according
to your will.
Give us courage to turn away
from temptation
and strengthen our desire to follow you.
May we, who were washed clean of sin
and saved from death in the waters
of Baptism,
be renewed by your Holy Spirit during
these forty days.
With the elect, guide our hearts
to repentance
so that, sustained by the Living Bread,
we may forever give witness to your love
and mercy.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus
Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the
unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Sunday, February 18, 2018

Conflict



Today's Readings: Genesis 9:8–15; Psalm 25:4–5, 6–7, 8–9; 1 Peter 3:18–22; Mark 1:12–15. Today's readings place us in the midst of conflict. In the First Reading, we hear of God's covenant with Noah after the flood destroyed the earth. The Second Reading highlights a spiritual struggle between right and wrong. Finally, the Gospel tells of Jesus' temptation in the desert.

No matter our experience of conflict, it usually brings discomfort. These readings show that God reaches out to us with love and mercy in the midst of chaos. God saves us from chaos and orders us toward a deep love. After the flood, God sent the rainbow as a sign of his promise not to

devastate the earth again. The reading from Peter reminds us that Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice and in him, through the waters of Baptism, the chaos of our lives is eliminated. Finally, in the Gospel, the Spirit drives Jesus into the desert to be tested. His wrestling in the desert prepares him for ministry and he emerges from the desolation proclaiming the "good news of God."

What is the chaos in your life? As the psalmist pleads, we too ask for the Lord's compassion. God never forgets his children. This week ask for God's help in resolving a hurting relationship.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, February 19

Your Words

Today's Responsorial Psalm reminds us that God's words are spirit and life. When the Psalm is read in relationship to the First Reading, we see that listening and following the precepts of the Lord will help us be holy just as God is holy. The ultimate Word that God spoke was Jesus, who showed us how to love and show mercy. How has God's Word given you spirit and life? Listen to or sing Bernadette Farrell's "Praise to You, O Christ Our Savior." Journal about what you hear. *Today's Readings: Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18; Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 15; Matthew 25:31-46.*

Tuesday, February 20

Rescue

In the Gospel, Jesus tells us not to babble in our prayer. Prayer is an intimate encounter or dialogue with God. It is a safe space to call upon the Lord in times of trouble and in times of joy. The Psalm reassures us that God rescues the just who call upon him and hears the cry of the poor. It can be difficult to enter into prayer sometimes and trust ourselves enough to share with God or to trust that God is listening. God is present and hears your prayers. Use the Lord's Prayer as a starting point for your conversation with God today. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 55:10-11; Psalm 34:4-5, 6-7, 16-17, 18-19; Matthew 6:7-15.*

Wednesday, February 21

Repent

In prayer, have you ever asked God for a sign? Jonah called the people of Nineveh to follow God's law. He was a sign from God who called the people to repent. Jesus, the Word of God made flesh, calls all generations to conversion of heart and mind. Jesus heals and saves us from our sin. Consider celebrating the Sacrament of Penance in the coming days. *Today's Readings: Jonah 3:1-10; Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19; Luke 11:29-32.*

Thursday, February 22

The Chair of St. Peter the Apostle

Today's feast is about the office of the shepherd who leads his flock on the right path. In the Gospel, Peter confesses that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God; Jesus chooses Peter to shepherd the Church. In what ways have you confessed that Jesus is the Son of God? Spend some time reading First and Second Peter today. *Today's Readings: 1 Peter 5:1-4; Psalm 23:1-3a, 4, 5, 6; Matthew 16:13-19.*

Friday, February 23

Turn Away

The process of turning away from sin includes reconciliation. The readings today illuminate this reality and call us to seek forgiveness from those we have wronged in the community. Consider the ways you might seek forgiveness from those whom you have harmed. Reconciliation frees us from sin and strengthens us to embrace a virtuous life. God is merciful and will shower you with abundant grace. Light a candle today and ask for the grace to turn away from sin. *Today's Readings: Ezekiel 18:21-28; Psalm 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-7a, 7bc-8; Matthew 5:20-26.*

Saturday, February 24

Path of Love

What is the path God is calling us to follow? This is a common theme throughout the season of Lent. What does it mean for you to follow the Lord? The Gospel gives us a clue that to follow the Lord is to love. Love is not always easy but is required of the Christian. God's love is nourished in the sacraments and our relationships so that we might overflow and share it with others. Think of a map as a tool for prayer. Consider the path you are on and the path God is calling you to walk. *Today's Readings: Deuteronomy 26:16-19; Psalm 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8; Matthew 5:43-48.*

