

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

Genesis 9 : 8-17

During Lent this year we hear from Israel's books of the Law those passages which tell of the covenants that bind God and his people together. After the great flood, Noah and his family set out on God's new beginning for humanity, under a covenant promising God's new blessing to all creation.

1 Peter 3 : 18-22

The writer explains the symbolic meaning of Noah and the flood water. Through the water used in Christian baptism everyone is brought to God's safety, because Christ has died, Christ is risen, and the power of his resurrection is present for us.

Mark 1 : 9-15

This Sunday's readings all have the powerful image of salvation through water. We hear now Mark's account of the baptism of Jesus, then Our Lord's call to repent and believe his good news. So begins our Lenten preparation, for those to be baptised at Easter, and for us all to reaffirm our baptismal covenant promises.

Click here to view the readings

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Genesis%209:%208-17%0Acw%20Psalm%2025:%201-9%0A1%20Peter%203:%2018-22%0AMark%201:%209-15

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

O Lord,
who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights;
Give us grace to use such abstinence,
that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit,
we may ever obey thy godly motions
in righteousness, and true holiness,
to thy honour and glory,
who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, world without end.

Collect Two

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:
Give us grace to discipline ourselves
in obedience to your Spirit;
and, as you know our weakness,
so may we know your power to save;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

Presider or deacon

God made a covenant with Noah and set a rainbow in the clouds. Let us pray for all the descendants of Noah, and especially for those preparing for baptism.

Deacon or other leader

For the holy catholic church throughout the world, sharing the death and resurrection of Christ.

Lord, have mercy.

For *N* our bishop, for presbyters and deacons and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.

Lord, have mercy.

For *NN* our catechumen(s) and *NN* their sponsors(s).

Lord, have mercy.

For all the peoples of the earth who share God's covenant of peace.

Lord, have mercy.

For all who are oppressed, afflicted, or in need.

Lord, have mercy.

For the dying and the dead.

Lord, have mercy.

For our families, friends, and companions, and for all those we love.

Lord, have mercy.

Remembering *N*, and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

Presider

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who saved us from the flood and brought us through the wilderness. Hear our prayers for all peoples. Receive sons and daughters into your family, wash them in the waters of new life, and feed them with your bread and wine; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

P O holy and most merciful God, by Your Word You created a perfect world. By man's fall in the Garden of Eden, that perfect world was ruined. Strengthen our faith by Your Spirit that as we must live in this sinful world, we may not lose hope, but continue to focus on the One who has crushed the serpent's head with His perfect life, innocent death, and victorious resurrection. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P O Gracious Father, You know how the tempter tries to allure and seduce us into gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature. In the midst of temptation, make us patient and enduring. Bring to remembrance the flood of our baptism, where You washed away all of our sins and evil desires and recreated us to live before You with righteousness and purity forever. Deliver us from all temptation and guide us by Your fatherly hand to live as Your redeemed children. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Heavenly Father, we pray for all who labour in their various callings. Even when the task is not pleasurable, give them joy as they labour to serve their neighbours. Protect those who are not employed and who are seeking employment. Relieve them from any anxiety, and remind them that You continue to provide all that they need to support this body and life. According to Your good and perfect plan, may they find suitable and fulfilling employment and receive just payment for their labour. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Lord of power and might, abide with the leaders of our land. Remind them that their responsibility for government comes from You so that their decisions will be made according to Your Word. Especially guide our government and politicians and all of our legislators and judges. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Lord of the nations, quell the military strife between nations. Ease political tensions, and bring peace to warring nations of the world so that we may live together in harmony. Defeat the plans of all those who stir up violence and strife. Support those who make difficult military decisions in an effort to defend our country. Keep safe our military as they enter dangerous situations. Give all military personnel courage and loyalty that they may serve with integrity and honour. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P O Father of all mercies and God of all comfort, look with favour upon all those who are sick, [*especially* _____]. Cheer them by Your Word of pardon and peace. Comfort them with Your forgiveness. Visit them with Your Spirit so that they may lift up their hearts from the physical sufferings of this world to the hope of glory that shall be revealed to them. Abide with those who mourn the death of loved ones, [*especially* _____]. In the midst of their sadness, give them the joy of Your grace in Jesus Christ. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

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P O Lord God, grant Your Spirit to those who come to the Lord's table this day. United in the fellowship of faith confessed at this altar/table, may all who eat and drink the body and blood of Jesus do so in sincere repentance and firm faith and, receiving the precious gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation, and giving thanks to You for Your wondrous mercy. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Into Your hands, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION

Lord God,
you renew us with the living bread from heaven.
Nourish our faith,
increase our hope,
strengthen our love,
and enable us to live by every word
that proceeds from out of your mouth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS

God of wilderness and water,
your Son was baptized and tempted as we are.
Guide us through this season,
that we may not avoid struggle,
but open ourselves to blessing,
through the cleansing depths of repentance
and the heaven-rending words of the Spirit. Amen.

Artist of souls,
you sculpted a people for yourself
out of the rocks of wilderness and fasting.
Help us as we take up your invitation to prayer and simplicity,
that the discipline of these forty days
may sharpen our hunger for the feast of your holy friendship,
and whet our thirst for the living water you offer
through Jesus Christ. Amen.

God of the covenant,
in the glory of the cross
your Son embraced the power of death
and broke its hold over your people.
In this time of repentance,
draw all people to yourself,
that we who confess Jesus as Lord
may put aside the deeds of death
and accept the life of your kingdom. Amen.

God of the living,
through baptism we pass from the shadow of death
to the light of the resurrection.
Remain with us and give us hope
that, rejoicing in the gift of the Spirit
who gives life to our mortal flesh,
we may be clothed with the garment of immortality,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Beloved friends, in this season of repentance and healing,
we accept God's invitation to be ever-mindful of the needs of others,
offering our prayers on behalf of God's community in the church and the world.
Fill us with your strength
to resist the seductions of our foolish desires
and the tempter's vain delights,
that we may walk in obedience and righteousness,
rejoicing in you with an upright heart. Amen.

God of our salvation,
your bow in the clouds
proclaims your covenant with every living creature.
Teach us your paths and lead us in your truth,
that by your Holy Spirit,
we may remember our baptismal vows
and be keepers of your trust with earth and its inhabitants. Amen.

LECTIONARY NOTES

Genesis 9:8-17:

- One of God's first covenants established with God's people - never again to destroy the earth and its people as God did in the flood. What other covenants does God make with humans?
- Have you ever made a personal covenant with God? Have you kept your part of the promise? Has God?
- The rainbow is a symbol of a promise. Symbols are important reminders of promise - we use rings, for example, as symbols of promises made in marriage. What symbols are important reminders in your own life?
- Have you seen many rainbows? When I see them, I am always filled with joy, they are so rare and precious. How do they make you feel? Do you remember God's promise when you see them?

Psalm 25:1-10:

- The psalmist mentions shame several times - his shame, the shame of those obedient to God, shame he hopes is put on others by God. Shame is a powerful emotion, a powerful motivator, a powerful weapon of oppression. Of what are you ashamed in yourself? In others? How do you *shame* others? Does God shame us?
- "Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions" - Many people probably echo the psalmist's worries - will be judged by all the things we did when we didn't know any better? I think we can trust in God's abundant grace, who calls

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us into a more mature discipleship. Indeed, verses 8 and 9 talk about God as a teacher, The One who instructs us. How have you learned/grown in your faith over the years? Are you a mature disciple? Or an early student?

1 Peter 3:18-22:

- Peter clings to a New Testament dualism between flesh and spirit. Sometimes, thinking of these separate spheres is helpful, but sometimes New Testament writers make it seem as though everything flesh - flesh God created - is bad. What do you think? How do we nurture our spirits without negating the temple/bodies in which we live?
- Note the connection in verse 20 to the Genesis reading for today, and the connection in verse 21 to the gospel lesson about baptism.
- The author has a unique description of baptism: not a removal of dirtiness, but an appeal to God for a "good conscience." This emphasizes personal responsibility and repentance without emphasizing guilt/unworthiness/original sin. It leaves out God's initiative of grace to us, but I like the way the Peter describe his view.

Mark 1:9-15:

- We start with a review of the baptism of Jesus - short and sweet in Mark. Make sure you compare Mark's recording of this scene (remember Mark is the earliest gospel written) with the accounts in the other gospels. In Mark, God speaks directly to Jesus: *You* are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased. Other accounts have God saying *This* is my Son. I prefer Mark's recording - God speaking directly to God's child.
- This passage highlights Mark's love of brevity - where the temptation lasts several verses with many details in Luke and Matthew, with a recorded conversation between Jesus and Satan, Mark sees no need for such an account, simply recording that Jesus was tempted for 40 days, driven into the wilderness by the Spirit. What do you make Mark's account? What does his brief style say about what is most important to him about Jesus' temptation?
- Mark again emphasizes that for Jesus, the good news is: "the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe." Do you see this as good news? Why was it so important for Jesus to tell this?

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

Ministry Depot - Get by the advert for visuals and its a fairly straightforward expository sermon on the temptations of Jesus which is presented in a well organised manner. It concludes - "The purpose of the Bible passage today is to encourage us to resist temptation, the way that Jesus resisted temptation. The purpose of this Biblical text is not to say that there are a variety of temptations for each one of us. The purpose is not to suggest we are to put ourselves in situations where we will be tempted innumerable times so that we finally cave into the temptation.

"The purpose of this Biblical story today is for us to be strong. Be strong my son. Be strong my daughter. Be strong! Just as the temptation is not theoretical and just as the temptations we face are not hypothetical, *so also the strength of God to resist temptation*

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is not hypothetical, the strength of God is not imaginary, the resources of God are not illusory. God does empower us with the Holy Spirit, the divine words living inside of us, and the Indwelling Presence, so that we too can resist the real temptations in our lives as well. Amen."

<http://ministrydepot.com/sermons/2009/02/mark-1-9-15-lent-1-jesus-and-the-temptations/>

Pastor Gavin - a self-confessed "Evan" talking about Lent! Organised around three points: Wilderness Time, Lent and Celebrating Lent. It concludes - "Lent can be an opportunity for us to spend time in the wilderness as Jesus did, as so many men and women of God throughout scripture did. It can be a time where we get our priorities straight. It can be a time where we learn to rely on God and not ourselves, a time where we turn over our sins and our pride, our selfishness to God and allow him to work a special way in our lives.

"Lent is not something to be dreaded, something to be mocked. It is not at all about being depressed or overly hard on ourselves. It is something that we can celebrate. As we enter the wilderness we will grow to know God better, we will find new ways to draw closer to him, we will find his call on our lives to grow clearer and more understandable. So, this spring, let us *celebrate* the season of lent together."

<http://pastorgavinellis.blogspot.com/2006/03/mark-19-15-forty-days.html>

United Methodist - A grandfather starts with the realities of potty training a grandchild! Sermon concludes - " This Lent I invite you to explore that life to which Jesus calls us. Consider the invitation to the kingdom of God. You are ready for it, but are you willing? Are you willing to give up the search for something other than god? Are you willing to be courageous and bold in following Jesus down a path you do not know to a place you cannot foresee? You may not think you're ready. You may genuinely believe that you just can't do it. Everyone else is ready, but not me. Well, you're not putting God in the equation. God is the one who makes you ready.

"If god exists, you are ready. If Jesus told the truth, you are ready. If the scriptures report accurately all that is needed for salvation, you are ready. But even if you believe all that, the question still lingers. Are you willing?"

<http://www.raefordumc.net/2009/03/mark-19-15-sermon.html>

CHILDREN

The Children's Sermon - on Mark 1: 9 - 15. Simple and straightforward. But no visuals etc. included.

<http://thechildrenssermon.com/mark1g.html>

Baptism of Jesus - useful visual for computer use etc at:

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/hmartin.htm>

Presumably there is a sermon on the site to go with it!