

First Sunday of Lent (Cycle B)

First Reading: Genesis 9:8-15

Today's reading from the book of Genesis takes place after the story of Noah and the great flood. Israelite people of long ago saw the rainbow as a symbol of a Warrior-God hanging up his hunting bow as a peaceful gesture. The rainbow symbolizes the solemn promise that God makes to Noah.

Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:18-22

This reading reminds us that just as Noah was saved through the ark, we are saved through baptism. Early Christians believed that those who died before the coming of Jesus awaited redemption in a shadowy existence described here as a prison. When we say in the Apostles' Creed that Jesus "descended into hell," we are saying that Jesus went to announce to those waiting in that "prison" that they had been saved.

Second Sunday of Lent (Cycle B)

First Reading: Genesis 22 1-2, 9, 10-13, 15-18

Events in today's reading took place approximately 1800 years before Christ. In that pagan culture, child sacrifice was common. That's why Abraham believed God wanted him to sacrifice his only son Isaac. Later generations constantly looked back to this event as an example of Abraham's great faith.

Second Reading: Romans 8:31-34

Today's reading is part of a hymn that celebrates God's love and which concludes the eighth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans. In our first reading, we heard how God spared Abraham's only son; in this passage we will hear how, out of love for us, God did *not* spare *his* only son.

