

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

First Sunday of Lent

February 21, 2021

Breaking Open the Word

STEP ONE: Listen to the Word

For Faith Sharing—Gospel: [Mark 1:12-15](#)

Theme: Lent is a time to open our hearts more fully to Jesus.

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him. After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.

Also, the Gospel of Luke is helpful: [Luke 4:1-13](#)

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over he was hungry. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, ***One does not live on bread alone.***" Then he took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a single instant. The devil said to him, "I shall give to you all this power and glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I may give it to whomever I wish. All this will be yours, if you worship me." Jesus said to him in reply, "It is written: ***You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve.***" Then he led him to Jerusalem, made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written: *He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you, and: With their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.*" Jesus said to him in reply, "It also says, ***You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.***" When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time.

QUESTION 1: As you hear this Gospel today, what words or phrases strike you? What idea touches your heart?

STEP TWO: Look into Your Life

QUESTION 2: (for children): When you feel tempted to do wrong, how do you remain strong in your faith?

QUESTION 3 (for youth): What is one thing you will do during Lent to become more open to God in your life?

QUESTION 4 (for adults): As you come to understand the temptation of Jesus in the desert, which one of the devil's offerings is hardest for you to resist?

Reading I: [Genesis 9:8-15](#)

God said to Noah and to his sons with him: See, I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you: the birds, the tame animals, and all the wild animals that were with you—all that came out of the ark. I will establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all creatures be destroyed by the waters of a flood; there shall not be another flood to devastate the earth. God said: This is the sign of the covenant that I am making between me and you and every living creature with you for all ages to come: I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and every living creature—every mortal being—so that the waters will never again become a flood to destroy every mortal being.

Reading II: [1 Peter 3:18-22](#)

Beloved: Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead you to God. Put to death in the flesh, he was brought to life in the spirit. In it he also went to preach to the spirits in prison, who had once been disobedient while God patiently waited in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water. This prefigured baptism, which saves you now. It is not a removal of dirt from the body but an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.

[* The Scripture readings are from *The New American Bible*.]

HNJ MISSION STATEMENT: Jesus calls us, the Catholic community at Holy Name of Jesus Parish, graced by the Holy Spirit, to invite all people to experience the living and loving presence of Christ by nurturing the spiritual growth of all our members through energetic celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, daily prayer, lifelong study of our faith, witness, service and hospitality.

OVERVIEW OF TODAY'S READINGS

The Gospel: Mark's sparse account of Jesus' testing covers a critical point. Like his Israelite ancestors (Moses and the Israelites wandering in the desert), Jesus, too, had his desert experience. He emerged from the desert victorious, defeating Satan and proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom of God throughout Galilee.

The First Reading: The story of Noah and the Ark covers a four-fold pattern throughout the history of Israel. (1) God creates, (2) human sin affects that creation, (3) destruction ensues and (4) God recreates. This is the first explicit covenant offered by God. In the Old Testament numerous covenants will follow.

The Second Reading: This letter informs us that Christ "suffered" so that he might lead us to God. This is how early Christians tried to make sense of Jesus' death on the Cross. The reading concludes with a discussion of Noah and how those saved (the righteous) in the Deluge saved by water prefigures baptism, which saves Christians now.