

# Integral Faith

"Homily helps and liturgy resources highlighting care for our common home."



## Homily Helps, Petitions, and Bulletin Notices for the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent, Cycle B (February 18, 2024)

### Homily Helps

#### † Scripture Passages to Note:

**Genesis 9:** See, I am now establishing a covenant with you and your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you... so that the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all mortal beings.

**1 Peter 3:** Put to death in the flesh, he was brought to life in the Spirit... 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.

**Mark 1:** He remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan... 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."

#### † Comments for the Day:

The theme of water runs through our first two scripture readings today. We hear of the power of water both to destroy and to give new life. The great flood described in Genesis was a punishment for sin, but it also gave humanity a new start. Saint Paul writes that the flood of Noah's time foreshadowed our baptism.

Baptism gives us a new start because we no longer live our small, individual lives; we live larger lives as part of the Body of Christ. It is imperative that we reflect on the responsibility that comes with our baptism to nurture the Body of Christ. How might we address the huge issues that affect so many of our sisters and brothers: xenophobia and racism, violent crime and wars, environmental degradation and climate change, and so many others?

Furthermore, God makes a covenant not only with Noah and his family, but with all of humanity, as well. God also leaves a reminder of His covenant promise to never again send a flood to destroy us. Today, we ourselves are the bringers of flooding from human-caused climate change, including extreme storms that destroy communities and sea-level rise that is decimating island nations. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis pleads for action to alleviate climate change and its impacts, including flooding that affects the poor and vulnerable – those least responsible for climate change.

This resource is provided by Catholic Climate Covenant in collaboration with the Integral Faith Team, a group of male and female religious, priests, and lay people dedicated to serving the Church.

Mark's gospel recalls that Jesus, after being baptized by John, goes out into the desert – a place of temptation, but also a place to loosen one's hold on the superficial clutter of life. It is a place of transformation. Jesus emerges from the desert renewed in spirit to preach his message to all.

Today, Pope Francis urges us to be converted *ecologically*, so that we might take part in the great work of preaching about and caring for creation. In this way, we can be the Lord's instruments to help renew humanity and the earth, our common home.

### † Passages from *Laudato Si'* to Note:

A rise in the sea level, for example, can create extremely serious situations, if we consider that a quarter of the world's population lives on the coast or nearby, and that the majority of our megacities are situated in coastal areas. (24)

It would hardly be helpful to describe symptoms without acknowledging the human origins of the ecological crisis. A certain way of understanding human life and activity has gone awry, to the serious detriment of the world around us. (101)

"The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast". For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians... ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an "ecological conversion", whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. (217)

[Ecological conversion] entails gratitude and gratuitousness, a recognition that the world is God's loving gift, and that we are called quietly to imitate his generosity in self-sacrifice and good works.... It also entails a loving awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures, but joined in a splendid universal communion. (220)

Water poured over the body of a child in baptism is a sign of new life. Encountering God does not mean fleeing from the world or turning our back on nature. (235)

### Related Prayers of the Faithful

**Option 1:** That faith in God's word spoken at our baptism and hope in God's mercy will lead us to realize our responsibility to care for the earth and its peoples, let us pray to the Lord...

**Option 2:** That our observance of Lent will inspire us to greater simplicity of life and less reliance on superficial consumer goods, let us pray to the Lord...

### Further Resources

Feedback: [IntegralFaithForLife@gmail.com](mailto:IntegralFaithForLife@gmail.com)

Webpage: [www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help)

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