

Church of the Divine Love

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

February 21, 2021 10:15 A.M.

Morning Prayer, Rite I

Please observe silence after altar candles are lit All pages refer to The Book of Common Prayer

Opening Hymn #143 – The glory of these forty days

Opening Sentences for Lent page 38

Confession of Sin page 41

The Invitatory and Psalter page 42

Venite page 44

The First Lesson: **Genesis 9:8-17**

The Psalm Appointed: **Psalm 25:1-9**

The Second Lesson: **1 Peter 3:18-22**

Gradual Hymn #495 – Hail, thou once despised Jesus!

The Gospel Lesson: **Mark 1:9-15**

The Sermon

Welcome and Announcements

Offertory Hymn #616 – Hail to the Lord's Anointed

The Apostles Creed page 53

The Lord's Prayer page 54

The Suffrages page 55

The Collects page 56

Petitions and Thanksgivings of the People page 57

For Strength and Confidence page 459

#49 – For the Aged page 830

#47 – For Young Persons page 829

#62 – Prayer of St. Francis page 833

The General Thanksgiving page 58

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom page 59

Dismissal page 59

Dismissal Hymn #142 Lord, who through-out these forty days

Sermon Sunday February 21, 2021.

First Sunday of Lent.

Genesis 9: 8-17; Psalm 25:1-9; 1 Peter 3: 18-22; Mark 1:9-15

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

During Lent, we look for signs. Signs of hope and promise. Guidance as to how we are doing. Portents of the coming Easter. Symbols of Christ and his presence that bring us comfort. God gave us a sign, a covenant, in Noah's rainbow. But in the calamity of modern days, is a rainbow enough? If God is merely setting aside his bow, does that end our adversarial relationship with God as he moves from Creator to Protector? With Jesus as the new sign of a new covenant which we now claim.

Our lesson from Mark is the familiar story of Jesus being tempted in the wilderness. Mark leaves out many of the details which Luke and Matthew have in their gospels. But then it gives us a chance to dwell on the key concept of this story. The idea that Jesus was tempted. "To tempt" means to try and convince someone to do something. Or I think in this case with Jesus' temptation, God wanted to see if Jesus would do what was required of him. I believe that this is God's purpose in times of testing. At the same time, Satan has his own purpose - to turn the person who is being tested away from God - to "tempt" them to sin.

God wanted to see if Jesus knew what was going to be required of him as he set his face to Jerusalem and the cross. Would Jesus waver from his path? Would Jesus give in to all the temptations along the way? Would Jesus give in to the temptations of the devil out there in the wilderness? As we put this story in context, we see that Jesus had just been baptized by John, a dove had landed on his shoulder and a voice from heaven had declared Jesus to be the Son of God. So then as Mark's gospel says, "The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness." Jesus left this place of the unreal and went into the real world where the common people reside. The world of temptation, the world of sin, and God wanted to see if Jesus would do what was required of him. To see if Jesus would reject sin and follow the path to the cross.

Lent is the time when we follow this journey of Jesus to the cross. We follow as he is tempted, as the Devil tries to convince Jesus to steer away from this course of undeserved suffering and death. We see Jesus come through this period of temptation with His face renewed. Along the way, we see Jesus set his face, and we see those who would minister to him as he faces the cross of Calvary. Lent gives us another opportunity to re-align ourselves with the purposes of God: To be less pre-occupied with our own needs and concerns. To make room in our hearts for others – especially the poor and the vulnerable. To listen to God. To share the quiet joy of his love. And be renewed in our longing to do good.

Then that brings us to the question, what does temptation mean for us? Are we tempted in the same way as Jesus was? And I believe that yes, you and I are tempted by all the sinfulness of this world to turn away from what is required of us by God. Although we have the power to

withstand temptation, the greatest source of our power is not within us as much as it is in the strength we receive from the Lord. People who fight off temptations do so due to the power of God. "I will set my bow in the sky as a sign of the covenant between you and me." God promised Noah and us that he will never give up on us. He loves us too much to give up on us. No matter what our particular temptation in life is, we can withstand it as long as we face up to it with the Lord. We have to take responsibility for our actions. We have to recognize that we can do evil and we can hurt others. We have to pray continually. Perhaps we have to pray: Lord, I don't want to do this. I don't want to be this way. Lord, help me. The rainbow, the sign given to Noah, is God's promise that he knows our weaknesses but will never let us go.

Although we are tempted continually, and although we may have failed in the past, we have no right to give up on ourselves. We have no right to beat our personalities into submission and consider ourselves unfit to do the right thing. No matter what mistakes we may have made, God still is there trying to keep us from falling into the same hole the third, fourth or fifth time, or seventy-seventh time. If God refuses to give up on us, then what right do we have to give up on ourselves?

Jesus was out in the desert with the wild beasts. And angels ministered to him. During Lent we reflect on what the wild beasts are in our lives. What are the particular things that devour our spiritual life? With the help of the angels, with God's love we can and will fight them off. True, we have to want to fight. We have to want to change for the better. That is what Lent is all about: spending forty days putting up the fight, fighting off the beasts, preparing to announce the Kingdom. We can do it. If we reflect on how easy it is for us to slip into our old habits and have that negative thought that we have no chance of changing, then we have only to look at the rainbow and know that God will never give up on us. We can change. We must change. His mission for us demands it. His love for us makes it possible.

Today we pray that this Lent we allow God to work his wonders in us as we struggle against those elements of our lives that would keep us from fulfilling God's mission for us. Look at the rainbow. God has not given up on us. We cannot give up on ourselves. The good news is that Jesus IS a King but not the kind of King that the devil suggested – Jesus is the King of Love. He shows us the Father's love and sends us the Spirit of love. Whenever we give in to temptation, the God of love is waiting there to forgive, before we even ask. As we walk into Lent, let us remember we walk with the King of Love by our side every step of the way. He guides us, picks us up when we stumble, and strengthens us when we're tired. May you have a holy lent, one of repentance, one of renewal, healing and restoration. **Amen!**

ANNOUNCEMENTS :

Bishop's Directive – When attending services we are all required to wear a mask ,use hand sanitizer, sign in with name and phone number for tracing purposes, and only sit in pews with decals.

The Thrift Shop will be closed for the month of February.

1 LENT

10:15 AM MORNING PRAYER
(also on zoom)

MONDAY

8:00 AM AA MEETING

WEDNESDAY

7:00 PM AL-ANON MEETING

THURSDAY

8:00 PM AA MEETING

2 LENT

10:15 AM MORNING PRAYER
(also on zoom)

SUPPORT THE FOOD DRIVE DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

Prayer for Grace and Favor in the New Year:

Dear God, we ask that you provide for our needs, we ask for your grace and favor. We pray for your blessings to cover us; we pray that you would help us to prosper and make every plan that you have birthed in our heart to succeed. We pray that others would take notice of your goodness and could not help but say, “these are the ones that the Lord has blessed.” Shine your light in us, through us. May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. Set your way before us. May all your plans succeed. We may reflect your peace and hope to a world that so desperately needs your presence and healing. In Jesus Name, Amen.

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Barbara Curran	Phil and Family
Dina Palkowski	Margaret
Frances & Donna Mongelli	Bernie Walther
Nathan Treadwell	Susan Hanaway
Tyler Gorman	Kim
Chris Dickson	Rachael
Michael Echevarria	Caesar
Donny	Bill Conklin
Michael & Family	Anthony Paribello
Martinisi Family	Edward Lent
Matt Marricco	Kate Jones
Kathleen	Del
Irene	Girard Bishop
Warren	Lois Kessler

Children who are ill:

Franklin Tenesaca	Ciara Berbeck
Michael	Christopher
Gabriel	Emily