

## **1ST SUNDAY OF LENT (B)**

### **THE START OF A NEW LIFE IN THE LORD**

God created the world to be good, but the devil disrupted it and had a chance to rule. God, being the Master of all things destroyed the world and begun a new world with Noah and his family. The waters of the flood wiped away evil. After the flood the Lord God made a covenant with Noah, not to destroy the world again with water.

St. Peter reminds us that the flood is a symbol of our baptism. We are told that only eight people survived the deluge. We have been washed clean through our baptism, and it is not bodily washing but spiritual bath. It is an appeal to God for a clear conscience. During our baptism we have also made a covenant with the Lord to be His children and He our God; to start a new life in Him.

There are certain questions to ask at this time, even though we are all aware that it is time for prayer, fasting and almsgiving. I have to know how sinful or holy I am. During our baptism, we passed through the flood and the old order was wiped out and we became a new creation. Have I been faithful to my baptismal promises, or have I thrown them to the winds? How white is the white garment given me? How bright is my light that was given to shine for others to see the way to the Lord? And how have I lived my universal priesthood of Christ? I have become a member of the body of Christ sharing in one faith and one Spirit; but am I a faithful member of this body?

Do I want to start a new life in the Lord? What do I have to change in my life to make me a better person in the eyes of God? What is wrong with me? Life comes with many challenges and temptations from every where. Where do my tests come from? Can I identify them? Do they come from within me? Or from home, or work place, or school, or friends? Do they bother me or are they just some of those things which we experience and so no need to worry about them?

Jesus was led by Spirit into the desert but He was tempted by the devil. This means that the devil is with us and after us. "Personal sanctity is not a guarantee against being tempted. It was during fasting and prayer that Jesus was tempted. In the same way the saints were tempted by the devil in so many ways to distract them from pursuing holiness.

We might have failed in so many ways and given in to the dictates of the devil, but there is hope because in His body, Christ has defeated satan and

has given us the chance of regaining our dignity as children of God. This is possible if we heed to His call to repentance as we heard in the gospel. We were told on Wednesday that we should repent and believe the Good News, because we are dust and to dust we shall return. I am always reminded of this any time I preside over a funeral of a cremated remains. I say to myself, if the body is like that, then what about the lost soul? It will be more miserable.

There are so many mistakes we have made in our lives, being financial, business, even marriage, work, education, friendship, and many more, which may be very difficult to correct. But in our spiritual lives, God can help us make a new start, no matter how old or young we are. He can make us new people if we are ready to repent. He sets before us life and prosperity, and if we choose them we shall live.