

STAND UP AGAINST THE COVENANT DESTROYER: FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR B, 21 FEBRUARY 2021.

GENESIS 9:8-15; PSALM 25; 1 PETER 3:18-22; MARK 1:12-15.

Grace and peace to you dear brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Today is the first Sunday of Lent, year B. We thank the Lord for His mercy upon us.

In the first reading of today, we have the account of God's covenant with Noah. God promised that no flood shall destroy the earth again and He gave the rainbow as a sign of the covenant.

God made this covenant not because He regretted the initial decision but because of His love and mercy, it is never God's will that anything He has created should be destroyed (Job 36:5; 2 Peter 3:8-10).

The first reading invites us to reflect on the faithfulness of God, a covenant-keeping God. God is ever faithful to His promises, His words are reliable, unchanging, He doesn't lie, forget or deny what He has promised (Numbers 23:19, Isaiah 54:10)

Again, we are reminded that as children of God, we are not created to be destroyers of God's creation and gifts to humanity. We are not destroyers of nature, institutions, societies or one another. We are called to be builders, restorers, protectors and menders.

The second reading of today gives a baptismal dimension to the flood at the time of Noah. Baptism is like that flood that washes away everything in our lives that offends the holiness and glory of God. It brings us into a new covenant of grace with God. In that covenant, God becomes our Father, He accepts us as His children and His heir, He promises to love us and be faithful to us and never to condemn us, we also promise faithfulness to God and commitment to live as His children.

The devil doesn't want us to be faithful in our covenant-relationship with God, He doesn't want anyone to enjoy the full benefit of this covenant of grace and so he relentlessly tempts everyone who belongs to God and is covered by this saving covenant.

In today's gospel, we see how the devil even went after Jesus, the New Man, shortly after His baptism, the purpose of coming to tempt Jesus is to thwart the covenant God wants to establish with humanity in Christ, He wants to destroy that which God plans for humanity. The devil is not only a deceiver but also a destroyer.

Even now, He tempts us with all sort of things, ways and manners. He tempts us with the pleasures of life, he appeals to our flesh, he tempts us with riches, positions and fame - he thus appeals to our pride, he tempts us to reject God, to doubt Him, to hate Him, to deny Him, to walk away from Him, to abandon our mission in this earth, to forfeit our eternal happiness with Him.

The devil will stop at nothing to try to destroy what and who God delights in.

Dear Christians, beware, be prepared, be firm, stand up to the devil, pray for discernment to uncover his tactics, be equipped with all the spiritual armour and do not give the devil an opportunity, do not give him victory over your life.