

# *ctkAlive!* Scripture Study

## 1st Sunday of Lent

### 2021—B Cycle



Photos courtesy of [Prochurch Media](#) and [Annika Gordon](#)  
Source: [unsplash.com](#)

*For your convenience and to broaden your benefit from this and all sessions in this series, you will find links to books, authors, and other references mentioned in the text.*

*Caution: Links to the internet are like rabbits dashing across a hunter's path. Instinct says, "Chase after that link!" Instead, we suggest waiting until you have followed the entire reflection. Then take all the time you wish to follow these interesting and educational links.*

*Exception: In the course of these reflections, you may have an opportunity to watch or listen to a relevant song or video.*

*Gender usage in writing: We are conscious of gender references to God in the Scripture texts. Often, attempts to rewrite these passages result in awkward sentence structures. We have left the biblical translations as they are but do our best to be inclusive in all other parts of the reflection.*

### Opening Prayer

*(edited for use here)*

#### **A Prayer for When I Am in the Desert**

Dear Lord, I know that wherever I am,  
you are with me—guiding, protecting, providing.  
You make a mountain into a road.  
You make streams flow in the desert.  
You cause a root to grow out of dry ground.  
Thank you for the opportunity  
to see your work when all hope seems lost.  
I pray this in your name,  
Amen.

Source: [Crosswalk.com](#)

### First Sunday of Lent

Genesis 9: 8-15 "I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."

Psalms 25: 4-10 "Your ways, O Lord, make known to me."

First Peter 3: 18-22 "Christ suffered for sins once . . . that he might lead you to God."

Mark 1: 12-15 "This is the time of fulfillment . . . repent and believe in the Gospel."

## A Reading from the Book of Genesis (9: 8-15)

“God spoke to Noah and his sons, ‘See I am making a Covenant with you and with your descendants after you; also with every living animal with you: birds, cattle,



that is, with every living creature of the earth that came out of the ark. I establish my Covenant with you. Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.’

“God said, ‘This is the sign of the Covenant I make between me and you and every animal living with you for all future generations. I set my bow in the clouds and it will be a sign of the Covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember the Covenant between me and you and every kind of living creature, so that never again will floodwaters destroy all flesh.’”

### Personal Reflection

God not only loves committed believers but everyone. The Covenant of Yahweh with humankind and with *everything* that came out of the Ark demonstrates God’s partnership with everything people create: their culture, inventions, and their legitimate ambitions. To every human, God signals providence and goodness through the climate and daily events. Yahweh invites Noah’s descendants—and us—to see the post-flood rainbow as a reminder of the Covenant. The rainbow, for all time, signals *reconciliation* between God and humankind.

— *What is my instinctive reaction when I see a rainbow in the sky? What, if any, spiritual meaning do rainbows have for me?*

No one thinks of Lent as a “warm and cuddly” season in the Church year. It seems we’ve lived a yearlong Lent already. Even so . . .

— *Why do I personally need this Lent . . . this year? (If this is a hard question, take some time this week to seek out an answer.)*

— *What signs in my daily life remind me that God keeps the covenant promise to love and care for me? What covenant commitments have I made—and done my best to honor (e.g., marriage, parent-child, job, priesthood/vowed religious life)? What signposts in my daily routine (like the rainbow for Noah) remind me to honor my promises?*

## Responsorial Psalm 25 (2-9)

A prayer for protection and forgiveness

*Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth  
to those who keep your covenant.*

In you, my God, I trust;  
let me not be put to shame.  
Let not my enemies exult over me.

*Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth  
to those who keep your covenant.*

Those who hope in you will never be humbled;  
those who turn away from you will suffer disgrace!  
Teach me your ways, O Yahweh;  
make known to me your paths.  
*Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth  
to those who keep your covenant.*

Guide me in your truth and instruct me,  
for you are my God, my savior;  
I hope in you all day long.  
*Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth  
to those who keep your covenant.*

Remember your compassion, O Yahweh,  
your unfailing love from of old.  
Remember not the sins of my youth,  
but in your love remember me.  
*Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth  
to those who keep your covenant.*

Good and upright, Yahweh teaches sinners his way.  
He teaches the humble of heart  
and guides them in what is right.  
*Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth  
to those who keep your covenant.*

### Personal Reflection

The psalmist begs Yahweh God for many favors.

— *Which of the five stanzas of the psalm comes closest to the needs of my heart today? What common thread do I find in these verses?*

“Remember not the sins of my youth, but in your love remember me.” Many Christians allow their earlier-in-life indiscretions haunt and define them still today.

— *In what ways do my already forgiven past sins still hinder me from accepting and trusting in God’s mercy and “forgetfulness”? What promise can I make to my God, my “rainbow,” today about letting go of my past mistakes and moving on with my life in gratitude and joy?*

### From the First Letter of St. Peter (3: 18-22)

“Remember how Christ died, once, and for all, for our sins. He, the just one, died for the unjust, in order to lead us to God. In the body, he was put to death; in the spirit, he was raised to life. It was then, that he went to preach to the imprisoned spirits. They were the generation who did not believe, when God,

in his great patience, delayed punishing the world, while Noah built the ark, in which a small group of eight persons escaped, through water.

“That was a type [*foreshadowing*] of the baptism that now saves you. This baptism is not a matter of physical cleansing but of asking God to reconcile us, through the resurrection of Christ Jesus. He has ascended to heaven and is at the right hand of God, having subjected the angels, Dominions, and Powers.”

### Personal Reflection

Peter references what our creed calls the mysterious “descent of Christ into hell.” The apostle uses common expressions of his day in speaking about the people in Noah’s time, “They were the generation who did not believe. . . .” Also note the comparison between the deluge and the Sacrament of Baptism: water washes away the old, a life of sin. The person who comes to Christ begins a new life in him.

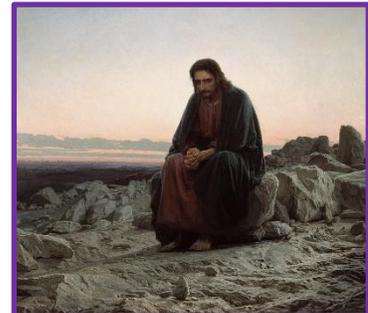
— *Whom do I know today who has the kind of faith Noah lived by? What is it about that person that brings him/her to mind today?*

— *What connection(s) do I see between the Noah story and my own Baptismal covenant with God (even if I received Baptism as an infant or child)?*

### Proclamation from the Gospel according to Mark (1: 12-15)

“Then the Spirit drove him into the desert. Jesus stayed in the desert forty days and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, but angels ministered to him. After John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee and began preaching the Good News of God.

“He said, “The time has come; the kingdom of God is at hand. Change your ways and believe the Good News.”



*Christ in the Wilderness*  
by [Ivan Kramskoy 1872](#)

### Personal Reflection

Since Mark, Matthew, and Luke included the temptation story in their gospels, the first Christians must have considered it important for us to remember it.

— *Who needs me to be an “angel” for them, especially during their difficult (“desert”) experiences, e.g., during this time of COVID-19 with all its mandated restrictions and hardships?*

After Jesus’ temptations, “angels ministered to him,” offering support and encouragement.

— *Looking over the years of my life, whom do I recognize as angels God sent to support and encourage me in my faith—during my “desert” times?*

### The Week Ahead

We can easily identify with Noah and his family, after being cooped up (“at sea”) for the past year. We don’t know for sure when—or if—we’ll discover “dry land”

and regain spatial freedom once more.

— *In what spirit have I endured my yearlong “Lent”?*

— *Though my options are greatly reduced, what can I do—today—to bring even an ounce more love into my closest relationships?*

### Journaling Prompts

— *What personal message or inspiration did I take away from today’s Scriptures? How will that help me face my personal challenges during the coming week?*

— *Based on this Sunday’s readings, what is God asking me to do this week regarding (1) the quality of the love I bring to my personal relationships and (2) my life as Christ’s emissary to bring his values and grace to the people I interact with at a distance via social media?*

— *Who needs to get a call, letter, email, or text message expressing my love and offering a moment of laughter and personal concern? Why do I hesitate to make that move?*

Take some time to write about your experience and feelings regarding the above suggestions and events occurring in your life and in our country.

### **For Inspirational Viewing/Listening**

#### Video:

[Bishop Barron](#) comments on “[Last Days in the Desert](#)” (7.5 min), one of several movie versions about the temptation of Christ in the desert. (“Last Days in the Desert” is available to rent on [Amazon Prime Video](#).)

#### Music:

Listen to the beautiful “[Because We Believe](#),” sung—with “bang”—by [Andrea Bocelli](#) (in English and Italian, 7.5 min.)

#### Film:

##### [40: The Temptation of Christ](#)

The temptation event appears in three of the four gospels. According to these texts, after being baptized by John the Baptist, Jesus fasted and prayed in the Judaeen Desert. (Former CTK parishioner, Matteo Rey, plays the child Jesus in flashbacks.) Available to rent on [Amazon Prime Video](#).

#### Book:

[The Way of the Cross](#) by [Caryll Houselander](#), reflections on the 14 stations of the cross in beautiful prose and poetry (*Note: I read this years ago, but—unlike me—it never gets old.—AJG*)

## **Preview of Next Week's Scriptures**

### Second Sunday of Lent

Genesis 22: 1-2, 9-13, 15-18 "God put Abraham to the test."

Psalms 116: 10, 15-19 "To you I will offer sacrifice and thanksgiving, and I will call upon the name of the Lord."

Romans 8: 31-34 "If God is for us, who can be against us?"

Mark 9: 2-10 Transfiguration: "This is my beloved son. Listen to him."

### **Closing Prayer**

*(edited for use here)*

Lord, you surrendered to the will of your Father  
and wholly identified with humanity.  
You let them nail you to the cross  
by your own choosing.  
Teach me to obey, to accept,  
to bow to the will of God.  
Grant me wisdom and strength  
to bind myself irrevocably  
to the law of your love.

Let me bind myself that I will not only  
adhere to you in times of consolation,  
in times of sweetness and devotion  
and when life goes smoothly,  
but yet more securely in the  
bleak and bitter seasons of the soul,  
in the hard iron of the winters of the spirit.  
Amen

Source: [\*The Way of the Cross\*](#), by [Caryll Houselander](#), Sheed & Ward, 1955

### **Questions?**

Send any questions or comments you might have to [algarrotto@comcast.net](mailto:algarrotto@comcast.net)

The Sunday readings are from [\*Christian Community Bible: Catholic Pastoral Edition\*](#)

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(follow this link to my spiritual novel, [\*Bishop Myriel: In His Own Words\*](#))