

## 1st Sunday of Lent



The readings for this coming Sunday's Mass—the First Sunday of Lent—remind us of the grace that floods our lives when we surrender our old ways and seek to be led by Jesus. Over the course of 40 days in Lent, Jesus takes us into the desert to reclaim or renew our obedience to Him. Three pillars of Lent that draw us closer to Christ are fasting, almsgiving, and prayer.

We might suffer a little bit during this process, but we can be affirmed that the voluntary suffering of the cross is far more redemptive than the self-centered suffering of our addictions and unhealthy attachments. We journey together so that in our weakness we may find unity and in unity, victory. Aligning ourselves with the suffering of our Lord and the needs of our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ rededicates our commitment to recovery and a spiritual way of life.

Saint Peter offers a word of strength and courage to new Christians while reminding us of the effect of our baptism in this week's Second Reading:

*Christ suffered for sins once,  
the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous,  
that he might lead you to God.  
Put to death in the flesh,  
he was brought to life in the Spirit.  
In it he also went to preach to the spirits in prison,  
who had once been disobedient  
while God patiently waited in the days of Noah  
during the building of the ark,  
in which a few persons, eight in all,  
were saved through water.  
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,  
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,  
who has gone into heaven  
and is at the right hand of God,  
with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.*

The coming weeks prepare the way for new Christians to enter the Church through baptism. Those who have already received baptism are called to renew their vows and accompany the faithful celebrating the sacraments of initiation. This movement begins on Ash Wednesday, as the ashes we receive are a reminder of the humility required for a personal encounter with Jesus.

## FYZWjcb Ei Yghcbg

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return,” are words that may be spoken as we receive ashes this week. In other cases, we may hear the words that Christ speaks in this week’s Gospel: “Repent and believe in the Gospel.”

The season of Lent is an opportune time to get back to basics and reestablish spiritual practices such as prayer, fasting, and sharing our resources. Basically, this is a chance to trust God, clean house, and help others. It doesn’t have to be over-the-top. As Saint Mother Theresa once said, “Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.”

- How would you describe the unity and connection found among others in recovery who share similar experiences?
- How does God protect and transform you in the midst of temptation?
- What plans do you have to seek a renewal of faith and obedience during the season of Lent?

### **Weekly Lenten Reflections in Your Inbox**

*Sign up for our Advocate's Circle to enhance your recovery, grow throughout Lent, and support others.*

- Exclusive video/written content on faith and recovery
- Monthly contribution of \$10/month has a direct impact on individuals and families experiencing addiction
- Receive a free copy of *The Twelve Steps and the Sacraments: A Catholic Journey through Recovery*
- Sign up at [catholicinrecovery.com/advocates-circle](http://catholicinrecovery.com/advocates-circle)

### **Sunday Mass Readings this Week**

**1st Reading:** Genesis 9:8-15

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

**2nd Reading:** 1 Peter 3:18-22

**Gospel:** Mark 1:12-15