

LIFELINE

First Sunday of Lent, Year B



The most recognized passage of the Bible that references a rainbow is Chapter 9 of the book of Genesis, which concludes the great flood of 40 days and 40 nights. From verse 8 onwards, the author writes of a covenant that is being established between God, on one hand, and Noah, his descendants, and all living creatures, on the other. The rainbow is the sign of the covenant, and it carries with it a pledge that never again shall floodwaters destroy life on earth. In a way, the rainbow is a lifeline between God and humanity.

More recently, another covenant was proclaimed. On January 25, 2021 eight members of the U.S. Catholic hierarchy, including an archbishop and a cardinal, signed a statement released by the [Tyler Clementi Foundation](#) affirming the God-given dignity of LGBTQ people. In this statement, eight bishops condemned any form of violence, bullying or harassment directed towards LGBTQ youth, and made the remarkable statement to these young people that “*God is on your side.*”

In contrast to negative ecclesiastical messages about the LGBTQ community, this new covenant floated a lifeline to LGBTQ youth everywhere and offered yet another rejuvenating exegesis to the closing words of the Gospel: “*This is the time of fulfillment. The reign of God is at hand! Change your hearts and minds, and believe in the Good News!*” (Mark 1:15)

GENESIS 9: 8-15

God said to Noah and his family, "I hereby establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that is with you - birds, cattle, and the earth's wildlife - everything that came out of the ark, everything that lives on the earth.

I hereby establish my covenant with you: All flesh will never again be swept away by the waters of the flood; never again will a flood destroy the earth."

God added: "This is the sign of the covenant between me and you and every living creature for all ages: I will 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, my bow will appear in the clouds. Then I will remember the covenant that is between me and you and every living creature, and never again shall the waters become a flood to destroy all flesh."

For all the readings for the First Sunday of Lent click [here](#).

FOR REFLECTION

1. The story of Noah, the flood, and the covenant can be read in many different ways. It can be a story of God's wrath, God's justice, God's redemption, God's grace, God's love or God's lifeline. What kind of story is it for you? Given your personal history as an LGBTQ person or ally, does reading this story lead you to fear God, trust God, obey God, or love God? Why?
2. In today's gospel, Mark writes, "*The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness. There he remained for forty days and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him*" (1:12-13). In the wilderness of your heart, faced with temptations (wild beasts) and graces (the angels), do you remember an instance that tested your faith? What temptations and graces did you experience then? As you ponder your LGBTQ/ally experience how has it led you to inquire of God's purpose for you?
3. In today's epistle reading (1 Peter 3:18-22), the author compares the flood and the salvation of Noah's family to baptism. How do you understand your own baptism? The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "*From the baptismal fonts is born the one People of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body*" (#1267). As an LGBTQ person or ally, how do you claim your membership into the One Body of Christ and how do you exercise your baptismal rights and responsibilities in this Body?
4. Has the LGBTQ community experienced any corporate baptisms in our history, like Noah and his family did? Did these events prompt us to give glory to God? Have you encountered such a revelation either in your own life or in the life of the LGBTQ/ally community? How do phenomena like these help you understand the death and resurrection of Christ, or God's ways?

5. During Lent, what kind of covenants could you draw up to reset your relationship with the earth, with other people, and with God? At the end of 40 days what kind of altar would you build to God and what kind of blessing do you hope for (Genesis 8:20-9:1)? How will you share this blessing with others?
6. What Good News (Mark 1:15) will you preach during this season of Lent? Or to whom will you extend a lifeline or bring to life in the Spirit (1 Peter 3:18-19)?

PRAYER

Psalm 25: 4-9

Your ways, O God, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant

Show me your ways, YHWH!
Teach me your paths!
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation.

Your ways, O God, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant

Remember your compassion, YHWH, your love -
your ancient and unwavering love!
In your kindness remember me
because of your goodness, YHWH.

Your ways, O God, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant

How good and upright you are, YHWH!
you show your people the way
You guide the humble in what is right,
and teach them your way.

Your ways, O God, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant

