

Today is the first Sunday of Lent, a season of Renewal. On this first Sunday of Lent, the church invites us to renew our covenant with God.

Our first reading deals with the unconditional covenant between God and Noah, who represents humanity. This is a covenant of renewal, recreation and restoration. This covenant was sealed with a rainbow as a sign of God's faithfulness.

In the second reading, Peter reminds us of God's New Covenant with us through Christ. He paid the great price in order to restore us to God. In other words, Christ renewed and strengthened the covenant with his own blood. He did this by opening the spring of baptism through which we were purified and restored to God.

This is the renewal of the covenant on God's Part. Hence, all of us who were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ have taken part in this new covenant. Each year, the church, the bride of Christ, provides us a new opportunity through the period of Lent to reflect upon this covenant.

Our gospel from Mark narrates the temptation of Jesus, and the sacrifice he made in order to prepare himself for his mission and journey. To be a worthy lamb for the renewal of God's covenant with his people, Jesus had to be tested. Peter 1:7 states this clearly: "As gold is tested by fire so shall your faith be'.

Therefore, today's gospel reminds us that, as Christ was tested, so shall we all be tested. Every day of our lives, the devil tempts us, and he will continue doing so. However, this should not frighten us, because the Holy Spirit that helped Christ is always available to help us. It is also a reminder, that temptation is inevitable in our Christian journey.

As we prepare to renew our covenant with God, just like Christ, we must persist in prayer, fasting and abstinence. We must ask God to grant us the strength to endure till the end of our own test as Christ did. Also, we must ask the Holy Spirit to fill us with humility, courage, and patience this season.

Finally, let us sincerely make use of this period of Lent to ask God for forgiveness for all the moments we have not been faithful to our covenant with him.