

February 18, 2018 – First Sunday of Lent

**First Reading: Genesis 9:8-15**

God then 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 said, “Here is the sign of the covenant between me and you and every living creature for ageless 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, my bow appears in the clouds. Then I will remember the covenant that is between me and you and every kind of living creature, and never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all flesh.”

**Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:18-22**

The reason why Christ died for sins once for everyone – the just for the sake of the unjust – was in order to lead you to God. Jesus was put to death in the flesh, but was given life in the Spirit. And in the Spirit, Jesus went and preached to the imprisoned spirits. They had refused obedience long ago, while God waited patiently in the days of Noah and the building of the ark, in which a few persons, eight in all, were brought to safety through the water.

That water prefigured the water of baptism through which you are now brought to safety. Baptism is not the washing away of physical dirt, but the appeal made to God by a good conscience: it brings salvation through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who entered heaven and is now at the right hand of God, having domination over angelic authorities and powers.