



Seen in the light of the Noah story, our Gospel reading helps us to recognise that Jesus was not alone during his forty days in the wilderness. Although it may be an aspect of the narrative that we don't often reflect on, the Gospel tells us that Jesus was with the wild beasts during this period. The Spirit that drove him out into the wilderness may have temporarily taken him away from human community, but he was not separated from other members of the community of the covenant during those forty days. Our Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, in a similar way, are not meant to focus us exclusively on spiritual matters, to separate us (even if only temporarily) from the world around us. As Pope Francis expresses it, "the life of the spirit is not dissociated from the body or from nature or from worldly realities, but lived in and with them, in communion with all that surrounds us" (*Laudato Si'*, 216).

TRANSFORMATION

Each of us has a role to play in the transformation that Lent promises. As Pope Francis often says, all of us are sinners in need of God's mercy and, for him, this is a recognition that the Lord remembers us in his love, guiding along the right path those who humbly ask for his forgiveness. The story of Noah takes place in a context of great wickedness and injustice, but, as Francis points out: "All it takes is one good person to restore hope!" (*Laudato Si'*, 71). As we enter into the journey of Lent, we pray that our transformation may play a role in the transformation of the whole earth.

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

When he calls on me, I will answer him; I will deliver him and give him glory, I will grant him length of days.

FIRST READING: Genesis 9:8-15

PSALM Psalm 24

RESPONSE *Your ways, Lord, are faithfulness and love for those who keep your covenant.*

1. Lord, make me know your ways.

Lord, teach me your paths. Make me walk in your truth, and teach me: for you are God my saviour. *R.*

2. Remember your mercy, Lord, and the love you have shown from of old. In your love remember me, because of your goodness. *O Lord. R.*

3. The Lord is good and upright. He shows the path to those who stray, he guides the humble in the right path; he teaches his way to the poor. *R.*

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 3:18-22

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory! Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!

GOSPEL Mark 1:1-2:15

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

SUNDAY BULLETIN

THINKING FAITH

INTEGRAL ECOLOGY



From 24 May 2020 to 24 May 2021, the Catholic Church is celebrating a special year to commemorate the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis signing his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, "On Care for our Common Home". As Lent begins, we recognise in today's psalm that the Lord shows the path to those who stray, and we ask him to guide us in his paths and to teach us his ways. Often, on our Lenten journey, we concentrate on our relationship with God, and on the ways in which we need God's forgiveness, seeking to grow closer to God in prayer. Through our practice of almsgiving, we reach out in care to our brothers and sisters in need, so that the transformation that God brings through God's mercy can bear fruit in our relationships with one another. As we journey through Lent with *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis invites us to enter into that journey in a way that brings together our relationships with God, with our brothers and sisters, and also with all our fellow creatures around the world.

In our response to today's psalm, we express our belief that the Lord's ways are faithfulness and love for those who keep his covenant. In our first reading, we see how God establishes a covenant with Noah, with his descendants and with everything that lives on the earth. Reflecting on the wisdom of this biblical account, and of the other stories of creation found in the book of Genesis, Pope Francis says: "These ancient stories, full of symbolism, bear witness to a conviction which we today share, that everything is interconnected, and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others" (*Laudato Si'*, 70). For him, care for creation belongs together with care for justice and peace. Human solidarity is inseparable from ecological solidarity. An integral ecology is one that brings these different dimensions of our faith into dialogue with each other, in response to the covenant that God has established with the earth.

A journey

through

Lent with

Laudato Si'



Dr Martin Pou SDB considers the start of our Lenten journey, reflection on the invitation to care for our common home

21 FEBRUARY 20

1ST SUNDAY OF L

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK

Next Sunday's Readings:

Genesis 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18

Romans 8:31-34

Mark 9:2-10

