

NATIONAL MIGRANTS' SUNDAY

TAKING CHRIST'S GOSPEL SERIOUSLY

Today, the First Sunday of Lent, we focus our attention on Jesus who, immediately after his baptism, is led by the Holy Spirit into the desert. There he spends forty days and forty nights, fasting, reflecting, praying and battling the devil victoriously. Then he begins his mission, inviting all to conversion. His invitation to take the Gospel seriously and change for the better is addressed also to us. The fruitfulness of this Lenten season depends to a great extent on our response to his invitation.

Today we also celebrate the 32nd National Migrants' Sunday. As our fellow Filipinos migrate to other countries, they may suffer hardship, loneliness, or abuse. But they also bring with them the richness of our Catholic faith and traditions. And this is a great opportunity for them to bring the light of Christ to all the people they will meet.

As we are about to start our Eucharistic celebration, let us keep our Filipino migrants and their families close to our hearts.



INTRODUCTORY RITES



Entrance Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Entrance Hymn is sung.)

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

Greeting

P –The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All –**And with your spirit!**

Penitential Act

P –With gratitude to the Lord who calls us to conversion in this Lenten season, let us pause for a moment and realize how much we need his forgiveness and peace. *(Pause)*

P –Lord Jesus, you overcame

the devil's temptation in the power of the Spirit. Lord, have mercy!

All –**Lord, have mercy!**

P –Lord Jesus, you began your apostolic life by proclaiming the fulfillment of God's promises. Christ, have mercy!

All –**Christ, have mercy!**

P –Lord Jesus, you invite us to undergo conversion and believe in the Good News. Lord, have mercy!

All –**Lord, have mercy!**

P –May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All –**Amen!**

Collect (Opening Prayer)

P –Grant, almighty God, through the yearly observances of holy Lent, that we may grow in understanding of the riches

hidden in Christ and by worthy conduct pursue their effects.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All –**Amen!**

LITURGY OF THE WORD



1st Reading Gn 9:8-15

After the purification brought about by the Flood, God is ready to make a fresh start with the few survivors. The covenant He intends to establish with Noah and his relatives is a sign of His enduring merciful love for all human beings.

R – A proclamation from the Book of Genesis

God said to Noah and to his sons with him: "See, I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants

after you and with every living creature that was with you: all the birds, and the various tame and wild animals that were with you and came out of the ark. I will establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all bodily creatures be destroyed by the waters of a flood; there shall not be another flood to devastate the earth.”

God added: “This is the sign that I am giving for all ages to come, of the covenant between me and you and every living creature with you: I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the covenant I have made between me and you and all living beings, so that the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all mortal beings.”

The Word of the Lord!
All—Thanks be to God!

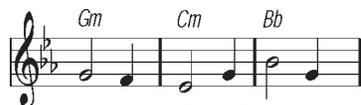
Responsorial Psalm Ps 25

R —Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth, to those who keep your covenant!

R. M. Velez



Your ways, O Lord, are



love and truth, to those who



keep your co-ve-nant!

* Your ways, O Lord, make known to me; teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior. R.

* Remember that your compassion, O Lord, and your love are from of old. In your kind-

ness remember me, because of your goodness, O Lord. R.

* Good and upright is the Lord; thus he shows sinners the way. He guides the humble to justice, and he teaches the humble his way. R.

2nd Reading 1 Pt 3:18-22

Jesus Christ has saved all human beings through his passion, death and resurrection. His salvation reaches us through the sacrament of Baptism, which was foreshadowed by the purifying waters of the Flood. Such is the message addressed to us through the passage we are about to hear.

R — A proclamation from the First Letter of Peter

Beloved: 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 the netherworld, 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 Word of the Lord!
All—Thanks be to God!

Verse before the Gospel

All—(Glory and praise to you, O Christ!)

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

(Glory and praise to you, O Christ!)

Gospel Mk 1:12-15
In a few clear strokes, St.

Mark portrays the first two steps taken by Jesus in his public life: victory over Satan in the desert, and the invitation to conversion addressed to all.

P —The Lord be with you!
All—And with your spirit!

P —A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Mark

All—Glory to you, O Lord!

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

The Gospel of the Lord!
All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Homily

Profession of Faith

(Nicene Creed)

All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (bow)* and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.* For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who

proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen!

Prayer of the Faithful

P – As we take the first steps in our Lenten pilgrimage, we realize our need to undergo conversion in response to the Lord's invitation. Aware of our faults and weaknesses, we cry out:

All—We beseech you, Lord, hear us!

C –For the entire Church who is always in need of conversion: May she follow the lead of the Spirit in rejecting all the allurements of Satan. Let us pray! **R.**

C –For the Holy Father and all other spiritual leaders: May their efforts to bring people closer to Jesus in this Lenten season be crowned with success. Let us pray! **R.**

C –For all the migrant workers all over the world: May they be treated with respect and justice, and be soon reunited with their families. Let us pray! **R.**

C –For all the Filipinos working abroad: May they treasure their dignity and faith, and be loyal to their dear ones. Let us pray! **R.**

C –For all the preachers of retreats and recollections: May their words be a faithful echo of the message of Jesus and bring all to a lasting conversion. Let us pray! **R.**

C –For all of us: May we spend this Lenten season in a spirit of penance and fruitful conversion from our un-Christian ways. Let us pray! **R.**

C –Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions. (*Pause*)

Let us pray! **R.**

P –Lord Jesus, grant us the grace we need to always reject the devil's temptations and live

according to the Gospel you preached.

You who live and reign for ever and ever.

All—Amen!

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



Preparation of the Gifts

P –Pray, brethren . . .

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P –Give us the right dispositions, O Lord, we pray, to make these offerings, for with them we celebrate the beginning of this venerable and sacred time.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen!

Preface of Lent (*1st Sun.*)

P –The Lord be with you!

All—And with your spirit!

P –Lift up your hearts!

All—We lift them up to the Lord!

P –Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

All—It is right and just!

P –It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

By abstaining forty long days from earthly food, he consecrated through his fast the pattern of our Lenten observance and, by overturning all the snares of the ancient serpent, taught us to cast out the leaven of malice, so that, celebrating worthily the Paschal Mystery, we might pass over at last to the eternal paschal feast.

And so, with the company of Angels and Saints, we sing the hymn of your praise, as without end we acclaim:

All— Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

Memorial Acclamation

P –The mystery of faith!

All—When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again!

COMMUNION RITE



All—Our Father . . .

P –Deliver us, Lord . . .

All—For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

Sign of Peace

Breaking of the Bread

All—Lamb of God . . .

Communion

P –Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb.

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(*To be recited only when no Communion Hymn is sung.*)

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

Prayer after Communion

P –Renewed now with heavenly bread, by which faith is nourished, hope increased, and charity strengthened, we pray, O Lord, that we may learn to hunger for Christ, the true and living Bread, and strive to live by every word which proceeds from your mouth.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen!

CONCLUDING RITES



P –The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit!

P –Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing. (*Pause*)

May bountiful blessing, O Lord, we pray, come down upon your people, that hope may grow in tribulation, virtue be strengthened in temptation, and eternal

redemption be assured. Through Christ our Lord.

All–Amen!

P –May almighty God bless you: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All–Amen!

P –Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All–Thanks be to God!

OFW Couple Makes the Right Choice

• Fr. Remo P. Bati, SDB

This is the story of Leonard and Cristina, a couple who had gotten married in Daet, Camarines Norte but somehow after

three years of married life, remained childless.

Cristina decided to migrate to Italy for work. Fortunately enough, after almost a year, Italy granted amnesty to irregular and clandestine migrants and she was “regularized” and given the “soggiorno” (visa). After two years, she was able to petition for Leonard through direct hiring. However, she found it hard to look for an employer who would accept a couple. But after much patient searching and prayers, finally, they were accepted by a couple who offered them a room to stay in.

One day, Cristina approached her employer and told her the good news that she was two months pregnant. She added that her doctor had advised her not to do strenuous work to assure a safe delivery. The employers did not accept the news as something pleasant and beautiful. On the contrary, Leonard and Cristina were advised to leave the place as

soon as possible because the employers did not want to have any baby in their house. According to the lady employer, Cristina would be more absorbed in taking care of her baby than doing her domestic work. Moreover, Cristina was ordered to undergo another pregnancy test just to be sure of her actual condition.

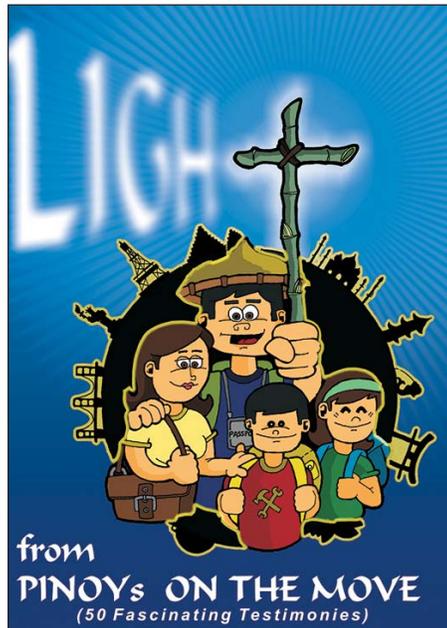
They were so depressed by the unexpected reaction of their employers. Where would they find someone who would welcome a couple in their house? Who would welcome a pregnant woman to work for her/him? How would they cope with the expenses of the child’s delivery? There was a real internal struggle in their hearts so much so that they also discussed whether it would be practical to abort the baby. Both prayed hard and after much prayer, they decided to keep the baby at any cost. They entrusted themselves entirely to Divine Providence and Mary’s motherly assistance. Every Sunday, both frequented the Filipino Community of San Barnaba in Florence, supervised and pastorally cared for by the Suore Oblate dello Spirito Santo (OSS).

Then one day, the employer’s husband suffered a stroke. He was rushed to the ICU of the hospital. Eventually, he gradually recovered and was transferred to a private room.

Leonard had been very faithful in assisting the old man. He was so dedicated and so loving to his employer that they were impressed by him. The lady employer was also touched by their calm attitude because, in spite of her

intimidation to send them away due to Cristina’s pregnancy, Leonard had shown such concern and care for his employer’s husband.

The lady changed her mind and told both of them to remain at home even after the child’s birth. Leonard and Cristina could not help but thank God and the Blessed Mother for having listened to their prayers.



A Filipino couple working in Italy is forced to choose between keeping their job and keeping their baby. Which will they choose?

Editor’s Note: Fr. Remo P. Bati, SDB served for several years as Chaplain of Filipino migrants in Rome. He gathered numerous testimonies from Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) he has met or those met by other Filipino missionaries all over the world and compiled some of them, together with his reflections, in an inspiring book. This article was featured in that book, **Light from Pinoys on the Move**, which is available from Word & Life Publications.



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PUBLICATIONS**

Don Bosco Compound, A. Arnaiz Ave. cor. Chino Roces Ave., Makati, Metro Manila

Postal Address: P.O. Box 1820, MCPO, 1258 Makati, Metro Manila, Philippines

Tel. Nos. 894-5401; 894-5402; 892-2169 • Telefax: 894-5241 • Website: www.wordandlife.org

• E-mail: marketing@wordandlife.org, wordandlifepublications@gmail.com • FB: Word & Life Publications

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