

## Gospel Reflection

The First Reading, from Genesis, and the Gospel this week need to be looked at together. In the Genesis reading, God has just wiped clean the earth and is ready to re-establish the relationship with humanity through Noah and his family. In the short gospel passage, Jesus enters the wilderness as a time of preparation and renewal, ready to embark on his mission of reestablishing the relationship between God and humanity. In both readings there is a sense of a fresh start—a clean slate—for humankind. It is a clear indication of God’s commitment to humanity, even when we have totally distanced ourselves from God and forgotten about keeping up our part of the relationship, God is willing to make a clean start of it all again. Both readings offer a reminder of God’s constant desire for us to be in right relationship with God and with the world. The presence of Jesus in the world was as clear a signal as the rainbow in the sky that God was willing to give us another go—give us a chance to again see God with new eyes and new understanding.

In the gospel passage, we have a picture of Jesus preparing himself for his public ministry. He takes himself out into the wilderness, away from all that he has known until this time, to reflect on his life so far and this next vital stage that he is about to enter. In the wilderness, Jesus is tempted. He has to face his own doubts and demons before he sets off on the road of his public ministry. When he leaves the desert wilderness and enters back into Galilee he immediately begins to preach and, in the first words accredited to him in this gospel, Jesus announces that the kingdom of God is at hand and it’s time to repent and believe. It’s a call to open your eyes and get with the program!

### Questions for Youth

- Q. Why do you think it necessary for Jesus to go out into the wilderness before he began his public ministry?
- Q. What does it mean to you to know that Jesus was capable of being tempted?
- Q. How can you use Lent as a time to respond to the call to “Repent and believe the Good News”?

### Questions for Parents/Sponsors

- Q. What did Jesus mean when he said, “The kingdom of God is at hand”?
- Q. When have you felt that you were in a desert period of your life?
- Q. How do you prepare yourself for something that you know is going to be challenging?
- Q. In what areas of your life do you need to see someone or something with “new eyes”?

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### **Sunday Readings:**

Reading #1: Genesis 9:8-15  
Responsorial Psalm: 25:4-9  
Reading #2: I Peter 3:18-22  
Gospel: Mark 1:12-15

The full texts for the readings can be found on the U.S. Bishop’s website:  
<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/022121.cfm>