

Purification and Enlightenment Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
First Sunday of Lent • Year C • March 9, 2025

*O God,
merciful and just,
in your compassion
wipe away our offenses
and create in us
a clean heart
so that, in freedom
and love,
we might
sing your praise.*



Sunday Word

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Psalms 91:1-2, 10-15

Romans 10:8-13

Luke 4:1-13

Repent

During the forty days that Jesus spent in the desert, he fasted from food and was hungry. No matter how much sleep he got during that time in the desert, his hunger undoubtedly contributed to him being tired and weak.

Jesus experienced what many of us experience. Our bodies and the human nature that they house have definite limits. When these limits are reached, we become stressed and even more amenable to temptation.

Afflicted or oppressed by various stressful conditions, we can easily succumb to temptation. But where we fail in the face of temptation, Jesus Christ did not. As Son of God and Messiah, Jesus won the battle in the desert, and everything that followed in his public ministry reflected that victory.

For Reflection . . .

Why does sin sometimes hold such sway over us?

From what sin(s) do you seek release and pardon?

When and why have you doubted God's Word?

Renew

Where we have failed in the face of temptation, Christ has succeeded. We place our faith in him. We believe that he is truly Lord and that he alone offers Salvation from sin and death. We confess this belief and call upon the name of the Lord Jesus as our Savior and Redeemer.

For Reflection . . .

When you have experienced distress, how was that lessened by the grace of Christ?

Who has been an inspiring preacher of the Good News for you?

How has that person helped you?

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Church Teaching: Our Confession of Faith in Christ

We admit that we have sinned. But we also admit, or confess, the great love of God that we have in Christ. In that amazing love and mercy, we have been saved. We have been rescued from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of God's light. Indeed, we have been made temples of the Holy Spirit through the saving work of Christ. Thus, dressing the wounds of sin, the Holy Spirit heals our hearts and souls through a spiritual transformation.

As Christ's disciples, we are invited to live in communion with him and walk in the ways of God's overflowing love. It is God's grace that enables us to continually confront sin in our lives. This confrontation and admission of sin allows us to progress toward holiness.

The Church helps us in reconciliation. It teaches us the Good News and how to embrace the virtues of Christian living in light of that saving truth. We are also taught to pray, individually and communally, and ask for the intercession of Mary and the saints. The Church offers the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation to those who have succumbed to sin after being baptized. The Church witnesses to our need for continual purification and renewal as we strive to be faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus.

Distinctiveness of Church Teaching

Saint Augustine of Hippo says that "God creates us without us: but he did not will to save us without us." We have a conscience that must be employed as we contemplate how Jesus saves us and how each of us needs that Salvation.

Acknowledging our sins is the first step in confessing the power, love, and mercy of God. It is also a protection against future temptation.

Key Images and Symbols of the Season

TEMPTATION—by which we stumble and fall

SIN—which weighs us down and keeps us from God

GRACE—the sheer gift of God's goodness to us; it buoys us up into authentic life

CONFESSION OF FAITH—expresses what we hold dear in our hearts

RIGHTEOUSNESS—by which we are accounted as living for God alone

Preparing for Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist

Is there a particular scriptural word or phrase, a concept from Church teaching, or an image that resonates with you in this season of grace?

Keeping in mind the experience of this Lenten Sunday as you look forward to Baptism, what will it mean to you that you will be recreated in the image of Christ?

