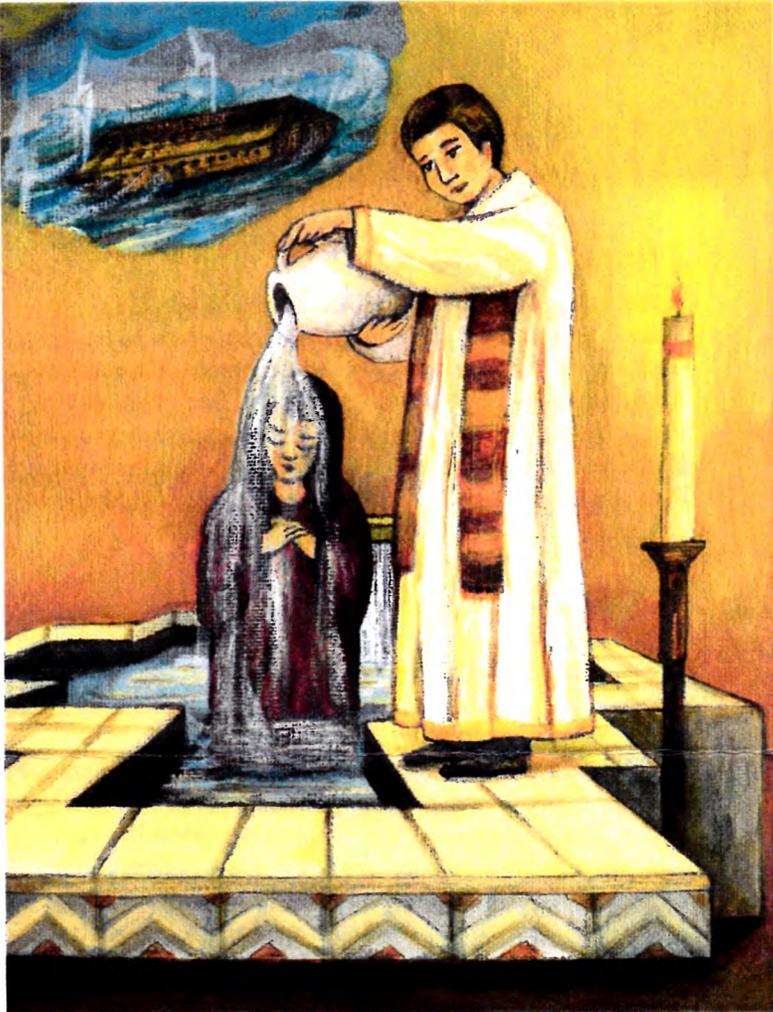# FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Washed Clean

Compassionate God,
whose promise of love spans
    all generations,
rouse our hearts to hear your Word
and teach us to act according
    to your will.
Give us courage to turn away
    from temptation
and strengthen our desire to follow you.
May we, who were washed clean of sin
and saved from death in the waters
    of Baptism,
be renewed by your Holy Spirit during
    these forty days.
With the elect, guide our hearts
    to repentance
so that, sustained by the Living Bread,
we may forever give witness to your love
    and mercy.
We ask this 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. Amen.

Sunday, February 18, 2018
Conflict

Today's Readings: Genesis 9:8–15; Psalm 25:4–5, 6–7, 8–9; 1 Peter 3:18–22; Mark 1:12–15. Today's readings place us in the midst of conflict. In the First Reading, we hear of God's covenant with Noah after the flood destroyed the earth. The Second Reading highlights a spiritual struggle between right and wrong. Finally, the Gospel tells of Jesus' temptation in the desert.

No matter our experience of conflict, it usually brings discomfort. These readings show that God reaches out to us with love and mercy in the midst of chaos. God saves us from chaos and orders us toward a deep love. After the flood, God sent the rainbow as a sign of his promise not to devastate the earth again. The reading from Peter reminds us that Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice and in him, through the waters of Baptism, the chaos of our lives is eliminated. Finally, in the Gospel, the Spirit drives Jesus into the desert to be tested. His wrestling in the desert prepares him for ministry and he emerges from the desolation proclaiming the "good news of God."

What is the chaos in your life? As the psalmist pleads, we too ask for the Lord's compassion. God never forgets his children. This week ask for God's help in resolving a hurting relationship.