




When we were baptized, chances are our parents leaned our little forehead over a baptismal font, where the priest poured water on us three times, saying "I baptize you in the name of the Father , the Son , and the Holy Spirit .

In the Early Church, people would be fully immersed in the water of a river, ocean or pool. As each person went under the water, they were dying to sin and, as they emerged, rising to their new life in Christ; in imitation of Jesus' own death and resurrection. The water on our forehead in Baptism still effects this dying and rising.

It is the first Sunday of Lent.

During Lent, we are called to renew our baptismal promises, wash away any bad habits we may have fallen into during the year, and renew our promise to love God in what we say and do. We trust God will help us.

We prepare for Easter by becoming more like Jesus!

For many ways, big and small, you can make this Lent meaningful, visit the Faith Formation page at www.nelsondiocese.org.

Gospel of Luke

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished.

The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man does not live by bread alone.'"

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, 'He will command his Angels concerning you, to protect you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

What is holy water?

Holy water is a **sacramental** (not to be confused with a *sacrament* like Baptism or the Eucharist).

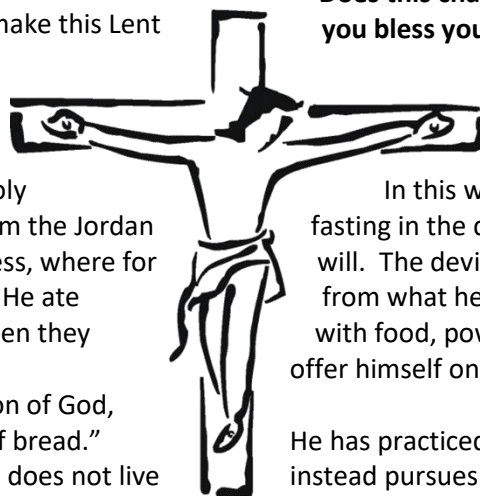
Sacraments, like Baptism, are visible signs which effect grace. *Sacramentals* are sacred signs which do not, in themselves, effect grace but do confer the grace obtained by the intercession of the Church.

What does that mean?

Holy water is holy because it is blessed by the priest. It is a sacred sign of the grace implored through prayers of exorcism and protection in the blessings of salt and water.

Every time we enter the church and bless ourselves with holy water, we are accessing the purification and protection from evil in the Church's blessing; and reminding ourselves of the grace and protection received in our Baptism!

Does this change how you will feel the next time you bless yourself as you enter the church?



What is Jesus telling me?

In this week's Gospel, Jesus spends 40 days fasting in the desert to prepare himself to do God's will. The devil comes to tempt him, to turn Jesus from what he has come to do by distracting him with food, power, and pride. But Jesus has come to offer himself on the cross!

He has practiced leaving earthly things behind and instead pursues the life only God can give him; he cannot be distracted.

If I compare my life to Luke's story of temptation, how does it measure up? Things I enjoy are not inherently bad, but are they distracting me from God and his will for me? Am I trading my heavenly Father's blessing for the pursuit of money or popularity in a world that I will leave behind, or maybe giving priority to time with tv or video games in a world which doesn't even exist?

What does God want for me?

Are my goals, and God's will for me, the same?

What can I change when I try to do everything by myself and forget to rely on God?

From the Compendium of the Catholic Church

572. Why is prayer a “battle”?

Prayer is a gift of grace but it always presupposes a determined response on our part because those who pray “battle” against themselves, their surroundings, and especially the Tempter who does all he can to turn them away from prayer. The battle of prayer is inseparable from progress in the spiritual life. We pray as we live, because we live as we pray. (CCC 2725)

574. What are the difficulties in prayer?

Distraction is a habitual difficulty in our prayer. It takes our attention away from God and can also reveal what we are attached to. Our heart therefore must humbly turn to the Lord... (CCC 2726-28, 2752-53)

Lent is about washing away sinful ways and rising to new life! In this, Jesus is our example, the Holy Spirit is our guide, and God is our strength. Read the examples below of how Jesus restored new life when sin had taken it away. Then write or draw examples of old sin on the left, and how the ‘new you’ chooses life instead on the right.

I am with you Jesus!

Sin	Life in Jesus
<p>God gives Adam life and a beautiful garden to live in. When Adam and Eve are tempted, they say yes to Satan and no to God. Adam and Eve must leave the garden.</p>	<p>Jesus fasts in the desert for 40 days. When Satan tempts him, Jesus says no! Jesus loves God in all he says and does. Jesus is the new Adam.</p>
<p>God frees the Israelites from slavery. In the desert, the Israelites promise to worship God and he promises to give them a beautiful land. The Israelites worship a golden calf instead of God. None of the Israelites who broke the promise will live in the beautiful land God prepared for them.</p>	<p>God asks Jesus to become a servant to all. Jesus will offer himself on the cross so we can live in a beautiful place with God forever! Jesus will only worship God. Jesus fulfills the old promise in a new and even better way – we can all have new life with God in heaven.</p>
Sin I leave behind ...	How I will live my new life ...

Spend 8 minutes. Check out Youtube for videos from Fr. Mike Schmitz: [4 Reasons for Fasting](#) and [Fasting Can Change You Forever](#).