

God Speaks to Noah

"I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth" (Genesis 9:13).

In the story of Noah, God sends a flood of rain to earth to destroy humanity, who had wandered away from him. But God spares the family of Noah, a righteous man, as well as two of every living species. Noah builds the ark and safely boards the ark with his family and all the animals. Soon, rain floods the earth; then the water recedes and the ark rests on dry land. God makes a covenant with Noah by placing a rainbow in the sky. It is the covenant between God and all humanity.

The Story of Abraham

"On tht day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: To your descendants I give this land" (Genesis 15:18).

"Between you and me I will establish my covenant, and I will give you many descendants" (Genesis 17:2).

Abram (later re-named Abraham), who lived around 1800 BC, is considered the father of believers. God calls Abram to leave his country, where there was worship of false gods, and journey towards a new home—the Promised Land. God promises him descendants as numerous as the stars of the sky. As a sign of his new mission, God gives him a new name: Abraham.

The Story of Moses

"He proclaimed to you his covenant, which he commanded you to keep: the ten words, which he wrote on two stone tablets" (Deuteronomy 4:13).

"Then, he took the blood and splashed it on the people, saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words" (Exodus 24:8).

The descendants of Abraham do not stay in the Promised Land; instead, they go looking for a better life in Egypt. But there, Pharaoh enslaves them. Around 1270 BC, God, through his prophet Moses, allows his Chosen People to escape by crossing the Red Sea towards Sinai. They remain in the desert 40 years. Moses receives the Tablets of the Law—the new sign of the covenant—which contain the Ten Commandments. Moses sprinkles the altar and the people with the blood of the covenant as a sign of their covenant with God. (In the Bible, blood symbolizes the gift of life.)

God Speaks to Jeremiah

“See, days are coming...when I will make a new covenant...I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts” (Jeremiah 31:31,33).

Around 620 BC, the prophet Jeremiah announces that, soon, their beloved city of Jerusalem will be captured and destroyed. The people will lose everything: their land, their temple, its king. Jeremiah tells God's People that the love of God is a treasure that cannot be lost like material goods. Jeremiah will stand in the middle of the ruins to proclaim the love of God and the new covenant that God himself will inscribe in the hearts of his People.

Jesus

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you” (Luke 22:20).

By presenting the cup filled with wine to his disciples at the Last Supper, Jesus offers them entry into a new and final covenant. Through his unconditional love and the gift of his life, he connects humanity to God by saving us from sin. He is the Lamb of God, whom we remember and exalt at every Mass. Jesus is both the suffering lamb announced by the prophet Isaiah, the Lamb of God revealed by John the Baptist at the Jordan River, and the one who promises us eternal life through the Supper of the Lamb. His Precious Blood is a promise of eternal life.

The Letter to the Hebrews

“May the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep by the blood of the eternal covenant, Jesus our LORD, furnish you with all that is good, that you may do his will, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13:20-21).

This letter, written as a homily to the first Christian communities, presents Jesus as the high priest of the New Covenant. God, who could be seen as quick to anger in the Old Testament, is now the God who gives peace. The author sheds light on the Paschal Mystery (the Death and Resurrection of Jesus) by proclaiming that Christ offered himself as a sacrifice—but in a different way than the priests of the Old Testament offered sacrifice. God saved us from sin and death through Christ's Resurrection. In this, Jesus became the perfect mediator between God and humanity. The Blood of the new and eternal covenant has been given to us to share at every Eucharist.