

**Homily For the 1st Sunday of Lent- Year A**  
**St. Peter's 9:30/11:30 Sunday Masses - February 26, 2023**

**Genesis 2:7-25; 3:1-7** "Eve saw that the fruit was a delight to the eye and would make one wise."

**Psalms 51:1-15** "Have mercy on me, O God. Cleanse me from my sin."

**Romans 5:12-19** "The new Adam, Christ, does what the first Adam did not."

**Matthew 4:1-11** "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from God."

**Hungry For God During Lent**

**Introduction**

Today we celebrate the first Sunday of Lent. What are you giving up for Lent? We knew someone who gave up coffee for Lent. Now you have to understand how much she loved her morning coffee, so this was a big sacrifice. What nobody realized was how miserable she would be without her morning coffee. After that, everyone said, if you really love us, don't ever give up coffee again.

Many of the children I talk to in school are giving up chocolate or pop or candy. Those are good things to do. However, if it just makes us miserable to those around us, we are missing the point. But here is the other thing. If it doesn't change something inside us and make us want to be more holy, then we should probably do something different. The reason we give up something is to make us hungry for something even better, much better.

That better thing is realizing what Jesus did for us at Easter time. You might say, well that's boring. If I have to wait 40 days to eat a chocolate Easter bunny, that's not worth it. But Easter is much, much more than that. Easter is the time of celebrating that God loves me even when I sin. God loves me even when I have a hard time loving myself. God loves me when I think other people don't.

**Gospel**

It says that Jesus gave up food for 40 days. Wow, that's a long time. How would one even do that and stay alive. He was human, so probably he would have had a

tiny bit of food to sustain him. Forty days of fasting for Jesus makes him physically weak. The important thing Jesus did was to give up something that his body needed so that he could let God the Father into his heart in a new and beautiful way. As he empties himself, he fills himself up with the Father. Simply physically denying ourselves makes us want what we don't have. Doing that same thing but letting God fill us with himself makes us invulnerable.

We can be really vulnerable to temptation when we are Satan can't break in because we are protected by a saving relationship. In a way Satan doesn't even really want that treasure. It is his antithesis, his kryptonite. But he does want to prevent us from accessing the treasure. By allowing Himself to be tempted, Jesus wanted to show us how we can fight and overcome our temptations: with our trust in God and in prayer, through grace and fortitude.

The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Again, the devil took him to a very mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

Jesus hangs his care on the Father. This is what Adam and Eve did not do. When we are tempted trust God. Can't resist Satan directly. You have to turn to God's arms. Jesus would have died uselessly if he had depended on his own resources.

The holy season of Lent for the next 40 days. The church wants us to reflect on the first sin of Adam and Eve. We see how they fall because they did not trust in

the Lord. CCC 397. All subsequent sin is a failure to trust in God's fatherly goodness. We try to pursue a happiness apart from God. Ps 51 This is a psalm for sinners. Try to memorize it. It talks about God's mercy and being washed clean of our sin.

## **The Desert**

In the Great persecutions took place in Rome at various times. Christians who would not make a sacrifice to the emperor in recognition of his supposed divinity were, in various times and places in the empire, stripped of their possessions and occupations or even torn apart by animals in front of thousands of screaming spectators. We have eye witness and historical accounts of these happenings.

But then something happened early in the 300's. The emperor Constantine believed he had been successful in a battle because of a vision of the cross of Christ. Christian life suddenly became comparatively comfortable but many felt that faith was being lost so they went out into the desert to find God in the simplicity of life there. They weren't so much looking for difficult lives away from temptation.

Abbott John had prayed that all his temptations be taken from him. Having achieved this he went to one of the elders and said, you see before you a man who is completely at peace. The elder told him to go out and pray that some struggle be stirred up in him. Only through his struggles would he grow in the spiritual life. After that Abbott John only prayed that God would give him strength to deal with his trials.

## **Genesis**

We begin Lent by hearing about the beginning of creation of Adam and Eve. In the beginning, Adam and Eve had everything, but the serpent convinced them that something was missing. The fruit from that tree. If you eat that, then you will have it all. You will be like God. The problem with that logic is that they (we) had

already been made in God's image and likeness. The first lie is that that God was keeping something back. Is it possible that we are continuing to believe that same lie? Satan knew he had to separate Eve from Adam's protection. Our fall was not superman losing his powers.

## **Romans**

Paul talks of the first Adam as a type of Christ, the New Adam. As Adam and Eve had been in intimate communion with God, so Jesus knew no shame. But, as Adam and Eve chose to believe the lies about themselves, one after the other and so became ashamed of themselves, Jesus trusted in God's own care, and so became our model in this trust so we can recover our dignity before God.

Jesus is the new Adam who remained faithful just where the first Adam had given in to temptation. In contrast to those who had once provoked God during forty years in the desert, Christ reveals himself as God's Servant, totally obedient to the divine will. In this, Jesus is the devil's conqueror.

Jesus the righteous one did what Adam did not. Shows us if we follow him how to resist. Led by the spirit to be tempted. He had to go through this. Firmly his willingness to lay down his life.

## **Call To Conversion**

We need to know how far we have fallen so that we can embrace the one who goes that far to bring us back. We could not do it on our own. It had to be God himself. The psalmist is King David, who had sinned greatly. He says: Have mercy on me O Lord. This is all of our prayer. Restore to us the joy of your salvation.

Our journey to Easter is with Jesus and it begins with this time in the desert.

It was a risky time for Jesus. But it was not time for him to die. So it is not that time for us either. But it is a time to let something that is in us die:

trying to do everything by our own strengths as we are born anew to be co-workers with Christ. And in a very real sense the "time to be born" is

Easter. In this way we can see Lent as a time to let the love of God grow in us by

doing good works. We are the children upon whom God chooses to shower grace and blessing.

My hope and my prayer is that Lent will be for you a time when the love of God will grow in your hearts, and thus Easter will be for you a time when you can really rejoice and celebrate a newness of Christ's life within you.

### **Key Passages**

**Entrance Antiphon:** *When he calls me, I will answer him. I will deliver him and give him glory. I will grant him length of days.*

**Collect:** *Grant, almighty God, through the yearly observances of holy Lent, that we may grow in understanding of the riches hidden in Christ and, by worthy conduct pursue their effects.*

**Genesis:** *The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ... And the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat." Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helper as his partner." And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed. Now the serpent said to the woman, "Did God say 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden? God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she too of its fruit and ate. And she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.*

**Psalms:** *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.*

**Romans:** *Be*

**Matthew:** *When*