

Readings and Reflection

1st Sunday of Lent

22nd February

First reading Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7

The creation and sin of our first parents.

The Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God actually say, "You shall not eat of any tree in the garden"?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die." ' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For 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 took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin cloths.

Responsorial Psalm 50(51): 3-6, 12-14,17 Rcf. 3a

Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your merciful love;
according to your great compassion,
blot out my transgressions.

Wash me completely from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.

My transgressions, truly I know them;
my sin is always before me.

Against you, you alone, have I sinned;
what is evil in your sight I have done.

Create a pure heart for me, O God;
renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence;
take not your holy spirit from me.

Restore in me the joy of your salvation;
sustain in me a willing spirit.
O Lord, open my lips
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Second reading Romans 5:12-19

'Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.'

Brothers and Sisters: Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned — for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not

counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgement following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man; much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Gospel Acclamation Matthew 4:4b

Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of
God. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

Gospel Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus fasts for forty days and is tempted.

At that time: Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

And 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, "Man shall 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 set him on the pinnacle of the Temple and said 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, lest you strike your foot against a stone." ' Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test." '

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve." ' Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

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Feast Days this week

Monday 23rd February: St Polycarp

Friday 27th February: St Gregory of Narek

The right options

Since he was alone in the desert, only Jesus himself knew what he felt. The implication of the temptation story is that he had to struggle within himself to find the best way to live his life for God. We ordinary mortals will hardly imagine ourselves turning stones into bread; but in the first temptation Jesus seems to toy with the possibility of providing a limitless supply of bread for people, like the daily dole-out of food by which Roman emperors kept popular with their followers. But Jesus saw how a focus on food and drink can lead to forgetting spiritual values. "Man does not live on bread alone."

Jesus sensed that his ultimate service to mankind, the effective one that would endure, would be through suffering and the Cross, after which would come the crown. Without his crucifixion and resurrection his message would be forgotten. In every event of life, God is saying something to us too. The story of the Temptations warns us not to let selfishness govern our lives. We need to be guided by the Holy Spirit, who continues to prompt our conscience throughout our days. Imitate Our Lord by taking up life's challenges, not with an air of gloomy resignation, but cheerfully accepting of what providence may bring. Let Jesus be a major influence in our lives, reflect upon his words and actions with reverence and affection, so as to bring about an inner purification of our minds and wills.

The second temptation was to seek fame and celebrity, and indeed, throughout the next few years the people kept asking him for further miracles. What if he were to throw himself from off the pinnacle of the Temple and be unscathed. But this would be just showmanship. He answered, "You must not put the Lord your God to the test!" as a warning not to be rash and superficial. Finally, in the scene on the mountain-top, seeing all the kingdoms of the world, suggests a temptation to become a political messiah, ruling all nations and having power to impose his will on people, like it or not. He dismisses this notion too, since we will enter into a true union with God only if we are drawn to it in spirit. associationofcatholicpriests.ie

The Cycle of Prayer**The Needy and Hungry of the World**

especially on Lenten Fast Day —1st Friday in Lent

Background

The agency for Overseas development, Cafod, encourages the Church in England and Wales to use the 1st Friday of Lent as an opportunity to remember the needy and hungry of the world. The day is an opportunity the three Lenten disciplines of Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving which derive from the proclamation of the Word on Ash Wednesday.

The proceeds from the practice of fasting on the Friday are usually collected at Mass on the 1st Sunday of Lent.

Prayer

All powerful Father,

God of goodness,

you provide for all your creation.

Give us an effective love for our brothers and sisters

who suffer from lack of food.

Help us do all we can to relieve their hunger;

that they may serve you with carefree hearts.

Roman Missal