

FIRST READING

Creation of our first parents, and sin.

A reading from the book of Genesis

2:7-9; 3:1-7

The Lord God took some earth and used it to make a man.
God Breathed into the man's nose,
and the man started breathing.
The Lord God had made a garden in a place called Eden,
which was in the east,
and he put the man there.

The Lord made all kinds of beautiful trees
and all kinds of fruit trees grow in the garden.
Two other trees were in the middle of the garden.
One of the trees gave life,
and the other showed the difference between right and wrong.

The snake was sneakier than any of the other wild animals
that the Lord God had Made
One day it came to the woman and asked,
"Did God tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?"

The woman answered,
"God said we could eat fruit from any tree in the garden
except the one in the middle.
He told us not to eat fruit from that tree or even touch it.
If we do, we will die."

"No, you won't die!" the snake replied.
"God understands what will happen
on the day you eat fruit from that tree.
You will see what you have done,
and you will know the difference between right and wrong,
just as God does."

The woman stared at the fruit.
It looked beautiful and tasty.
She wanted the wisdom that it would give her,
and she ate some of the fruit.
She gave some to her husband Adam, and he ate it too.

At once they saw what they had done,
and they realized that they were naked.
So they sewed fig leaves together to make clothes for themselves.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

51:1, 10, 12, 15

R. (3a) Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

You are kind, God!
Please have pity on me.
You are always merciful!
Please wipe away my sins.

R. Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Create pure thoughts in me
and make me faithful again.

R. Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Make me as happy as you did
when you saved me; make me want to obey!

R. Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Help me to speak,
and I will praise you, Lord.

R. Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

VERSE BEFORE THE GOSPEL

Matthew 4:4b

R. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

No one Lives on bread alone,
But on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

R. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL

Jesus fasted for forty days and nights and was tempted.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew 4:1-11

The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert,
so that the devil could test him.
After Jesus went without eating for forty days and nights,
he was very hungry.
Then the devil came to him and said,
“If you are God’s Son,
tell those stones to turn into bread.”

Jesus answered,
“The Scriptures say: ‘No one can live only on food.
People need every word that God has spoken.’”

Next, the devil took Jesus to the holy city
and had him stand on the highest part of the temple.

The devil said, “If you are God’s Son, jump off.
The Scriptures say: ‘God will give his angels orders about you.
They will catch you in their arms,
And you will not hurt your feet on the stones.’”

Jesus answered, “The Scriptures also say,
‘Don’t try to test the Lord your God!’”

Finally, the devil took Jesus up on a very high mountain
and showed him all the kingdoms on earth and their power.
The devil said to him, “I will give all this to you,
if you will bow down and worship me.”

Jesus answered, “Go away, Satan!
The Scriptures say: “Worship the Lord your God and serve only him.””

Then the devil left Jesus,
and angels came to help him.

The gospel of the Lord.

First Sunday of Lent – Open Your Heart!

Welcome to the Celebration of Lent! Each year we are invited to follow Jesus on a path that takes us from Ash Wednesday to Palm Sunday which leads us to the Easter Celebration. Lent is a special time to open our hearts to God, to be closer to God and to give and receive forgiveness. The path that Jesus invites us to take with him leads us home to God. As we follow the path we will find hurt, pain, tears and rejection. When we choose to follow the path with Jesus we find joy, hope and happiness in the family of God.

Reflection: The readings today remind us that we belong to God. As human persons created in God's image we always seem to want more than we are given. God creates the human heart to make choices. Some choices bring us closer to God other choices keep us away from God. Whatever we choose we still belong to God. God desires for us to come closer, but only we can make the choice to move closer to God. When we remember the times we ask for more than we need this is when Jesus invites us to take his hand and follow the path that leads to God. Jesus chose baptism, to fully open his heart to God, to choose only God's will for him and to lead the human heart along the path to God. To prepare his own heart for this great mission, Jesus leaves all that is familiar to him to be alone with God. Prayer is the guiding power in the relationship with God, his father.

Jesus quickly learns the power that turns the human heart away from God. Jesus knows that the human heart must rely on God's grace, to say no to temptation. The heart of Jesus is the teacher of the human heart.

Invitation for Action: Take a moment and take a look deep within your heart. Who are the people you care the most about? What keeps you from moving closer to that person? Who are the people you need to forgive? Who are the people you need to ask for forgiveness? Jesus cared more for his Father and for all God's creation especially the human heart.

Open your heart, come closer to God, and choose forgiveness.

1. Draw a heart in the center of a clean piece of paper. Print GOD in the center of your heart.
2. Around the heart write the names of the people you care the most about.
3. Like spokes on the wheel of your bike, create lines going out from each name. On the line, write a word, draw a picture or cut a picture from an old magazine that reminds you of a time you were hurt by this person or a time when you hurt this person.
4. Look at each line you made. Did you forgive the person for hurting you? Did you ask for forgiveness from the person who hurt you? Did you answer NO to any of these experiences?
5. Open your heart to God, invite Jesus to walk with you on the path of Forgiveness and go to the people you care about to talk about the hurt and forgiveness.
6. Celebrate with the people you care about – the forgiveness of the human heart. For example: Share together some cookies and milk, some ice cream, a hot or cold drink