

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR B; HOMILY HIGHLIGHTS

READINGS; 1st Gen. 9:8-15, 2nd 1Pet. 3:18-22, Gospel Mk. 1: 12-15

“We have a high priest who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin” (Heb. 4: 15)

Introduction; I would like to begin by giving a quote from St. Benedict; “in these days, therefore, let us add something beyond the wanted measure of our service, such as private prayers and abstinence in food and drink. Let each one, over and above the measure prescribed for him, offer God something of his/her own freewill in the joy of the Holy Spirit”. This quote gives us the reasons to do something good and big for God and our neighbors during this time of Lent and be filled with the joy that comes with the resurrection of our Lord from the dead on the last day. Fasting, prayer and alms giving are but the special means to stay with Jesus in the desert for forty days and nights.

Reflection; none of us in this life is free from temptation. Even Jesus was not exempted from it. As we have in today’s gospel passage that he went to the desert and there he stayed for forty days and nights. The full text of what happened in the desert is found in Mathew and in Luke. We too are being tempted in every way, every day and in various ways. Temptations could be coming from ourselves, others, environment, possessions and even from our dreams in life. There are good and bad temptations in this life. Good temptations bring us to a better and higher end while bad ones limit us, destroy and bring us a bad end. We need to reflect, pray and fast in order to discern correctly when we are tempted. We should invite Jesus; imitate him whenever we are tempted in life that we may win the devil who always puts us in the danger temptations.

When we are tempted let us remember that we are not alone, our Lord Jesus was tempted before us. He will always give us the strength to win and choose the better part of it. We should not be discouraged, we should stand firm in our faith, face the challenge with prudence. Answers to some questions do not come from us they come from the Holy Spirit who speaks on our behalf. The gospel invites us today to examine our conscience to give a new direction to our life and find our new self in the side of the lord. From the gospel we read; it is time to turn towards God, God’s kingdom is at hand, we have to repent and make good our covenant with God and we have to believe and live the teachings of the gospel every day of our life. These demands won’t come automatically; something needs to be done by us. Forty days are special for all these.

Lenten season is a reminder to us all to take our Christian commitment seriously and put some resolutions to begin anew. Let us use this time to prepare worthily for the celebration of Easter. Let our fasting and abstinence bring us closer to the lord. If the lord is faithful in His covenant, we too have to become faithful in our covenantal relationship with Him. Forty days should be a time enough for renewal and re-orientation of our life towards the lord. Lord, come to our aid.