

## First Sunday of Lent – March 1, 2020

**Readings:** Gen 2:7-9; 3:1-7; Ps 51:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 17; Rom 5:12-19; Mt 4:1-11

Every Sunday in Lent, the Church draws on some of the most important moments in the Old Testament to give an overview of salvation. Since I'll likely be preaching on the Gospels at Mass, I want to provide some additional background on these readings.

The 1st reading today combines the accounts of the creation and the fall of Adam and Eve. Of course, many questions arise when we read these passages, often centering around their literary genre: is this history? Myth? Some combination? After all, some parts of Scripture are not history (e.g., the Psalms: poetry; Proverbs: moral exhortation and riddles; Jesus' parables: stories) while other parts definitely are history (e.g., the Gospels). Here in Genesis, the Church holds that we are indeed dealing with history, but told in an ancient Near Eastern way, at times possibly using "figurative" and "symbolic" language (Catechism of the Catholic Church 337, 362, 390, 396, etc.). Some have called this type of ancient history "mythopoeia" (Scott Hahn, "Introduction to Genesis," The Book of Genesis: Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, 2010). In any case, the fact remains that no matter what part of Scripture we are dealing with, God is the primary author, teaching us truth through inspired human authors and their particular ways of writing. And therefore, every word and detail are important (CCC 105-114). What, then, is God teaching us today?

We are learning both about mankind's original sin and also how temptation fundamentally works (CCC 385-421). Adam and Eve disobeyed God, eating the fruit of the one tree forbidden to them, bringing various consequences upon themselves, us, and the world. But before this disobedience was distrust, instigated by the Devil. The serpent asks: "did God really tell you not to eat the fruit...?" thus sowing seeds of distrust in God, His Word, and His character. And then: "...God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is evil." The sense is that God is a tyrant, wanting to oppress us. And then the account of Eve's own thought-process is telling: "The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom." Ancient

Jews saw in this the "triple concupiscence" spoken of later by John: "For all that is in the world, sensual lust, enticement for the eyes, and a pretentious life, is not from the Father but is from the world" (1 Jn 2:16).

The Devil still works the same way. We naturally desire to enjoy what is desirable; to be united with what is beautiful; and to know the truth. But the "father of lies" (Jn 8:44) wants to direct these desires away their true goal, life with God, and so he tempts us by distrust and disobedience, until we are enslaved by lust, greed, and pride, searching for happiness in all the wrong ways. Ashamed, we fearfully "hide" from God (Gen 3:7-8), having separated ourselves from His friendship, and must await some redeemer (Gen 3:15) who can enable us to once again trust and obey God like a loving Father (Jn 6:38; Phil 2:8; Heb 5:8; etc.).

Now, how does Jesus, the "New Adam," undo Adam and Eve's sin in today's Gospel?

God bless,  
Fr. Tim Daniel



*St. John Paul II Seminarists*

**Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>. at 10:00am Mass.** This is a wonderful time for parishioners to meet St. John Paul II Seminarists. After the Mass, please join us in the Lounge for Nativity's Parish Social. There will be donuts, coffee, juice, and fellowship. Also, a great time to get to know each other better. Social Sunday is free to all parishioners.

## Stations of the Cross



Every Friday during lent at 5:30pm.

## Adoration



Every Friday during lent at 6:00pm

**Dollars and Diapers Outreach Ministry 2020.** Diapers may be dropped off at the front vestibule of the church in the labeled collection containers. Donation envelopes are in a basket located on the altar rail labeled DOLLARS AND DIAPERS. **Please place all monetary donations in the envelopes into the Sunday collection basket while the campaign is ongoing.**



## Mass Intentions

February 29 – March 7, 2020

Sat. 2/29	8:00am	Souls in Purgatory
	4:30pm	+Efrain Fernandez
Sun. 3/1	8:00am	+Jonathan C. Mitchell & deceased family members
	10:00am	St. John Pal II Seminarians
	1:00pm	People of the Parish
Mon. 3/2	12:00pm	+Jane Naughton
Tue. 3/3	12:00pm	+Rosemary Lane
Wed. 3/4	12:00pm	Special intention
Thu. 3/5		No mass
Fri. 3/6	12:00pm	+Charles P. Ferry
Sat. 3/7	8:00am	No mass
	10:15am.....	+Phillip Mangum Funeral
	4:30pm	+Lukas Pastier

**Pray for the sick and home-bound of our Parish:**

**Lenten Fish Fry.** Knights of Columbus, Keane Council #353, will start selling dinners, sandwiches and sides every Friday during lent (except Holy Friday) at the end of Adoration. Tickets can be purchased in advance. All proceeds benefit Nativity and St. Gabriel parishes.



**Weekly Rosary** with Meditations by Saint John Paul II. Every Saturday during lent at 12:45pm.

**Saint John Paul II National Shrine**  
3900 Harewood Rd., NE.  
Washington, DC 20017

**Question of the week.** When was the last time I gave in to temptation? What wisdom have I gained since then?