

The Bells of St. Mary's The Church of the Immaculate Conception

First Sunday in Lent March 1, 2020

From Fr. Anthony Ekanem, MSP

Paradise Lost and Found Again

Every year on the first Sunday of Lent, the focus is on temptation. The serpent in the Garden tempts Adam and Eve. Jesus is induced in the desert by the devil three times and He responded three times with this words: "It is written." as it is found in the Matthew Gospel 4:4. Though the attractions in our life may not be as dramatic as those in Genesis or the Gospels, they may be just as powerful. We are called upon not to take the story of the Book of Genesis literally but reflect attentively to the message behind the story.

The story of the fall of Adam and Eve and the story of the tempting of Jesus are two very sophisticated stories. In the First Reading, Genesis 2:7 – 9; 3:1-7, Adam and Eve disobeyed God, Jesus in the Gospel reading resisted the devil's repeated attempts. St Paul in the Second reading, Romans 5:12 -19, relates the two and explains that the effects of Jesus' obedience to God's will - from the desert to the cross - far exceed the harmful impact of Adam's disobedience.

This first reading for Lent tells us the story of humanity's troubled relationship with God and the various efforts God makes to draw us back. We heard prophet Joel 2:12 -18 on Ash Wednesday, calling on the whole Community encouraging the priests to return with their whole heart, with fasting, and weeping and mourning. The tragic disobedience in the Garden brought about distrust in God, resulting in spiritual and physical death. That is why it is not out of place to join the Psalmist in prayerfully saying "Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned." Ps 51. Jesus is the new Adam, who, by His obedience, restores for us the gifts lost by the disobedience of the first Adam, Second Reading Romans 5:22-19. Jesus is the new Israel not found wanting but remained faithful to God throughout the temptation in the desert. How is our 40 days in the desert going to be like?

Before the fall, Adam and Eve had no choice. It was as if they were programmed to do the will of God all through. They had no sense of being responsible for their actions and decisions. They knew no such thing as remorse or regret. But they did not know well - being at doing the right thing either. They were no better than the animals, who live not by choice but by instinct. But then God gave them the freedom to choose. In so doing, He made it possible for them to be mortal, that is, to decide freely to do what is right. Now they had the opportunity to live by choice, to live consciously. Unfortunately, they abused that freedom. To choose evil is to abuse the privilege. Have we not fallen again and again into making wrong choices, choose today whom you are going to serve like we heard in the Book of Sirach 15:15 -20, a couple of Sundays ago.

In the desert, Jesus faced the same choice as that which Adam and Eve. To do his own will or to be the will of God. Unlike Adam and Eve, He made an irrevocable decision to do God's will rather than his own. Every day we faced with choices to do good or to do evil, to choose for or against God must always bear in mind the consequence of our actions. It is clear that we have in us a strain of rebelliousness, of self-centeredness, of short-sightedness, which causes us to make the wrong choices, and leads to self-destructive behavior.

The fact that Jesus won an essential victory in the desert didn't mean the war was over. We still have to struggle along and cooperate with His grace to choose what is right in every situation. Like the Psalmist today, "Thoroughly wash me from my guilt and of my sin cleanse me." Adam and Eve lost their original innocence but Jesus came to restore us to that original dignity. That is why in every human heart there is that constant longing for the Lost Eden and the Lost Paradise. And so, Lenten Season, a season of grace and reconciliation is a profound opportunity to resist sin, choose what is right through: Prayer, abstinence, fasting, almsgiving and penance, God in His infinite mercy is calling on us to come back to Him, come to that paradise set for us before the foundation of the world through our self mortification and self denial this time. Join us as we pray The Stations of the Cross together in English, Spanish and Arabic language in our Church as we journey with Jesus this Lenten Season.

As we come before God in prayer, is there some part within us that wants to hide?

What helps us to resist temptation?

Stewardship

*Tithing - God's Plan for Giving on Sunday, 2/23/2020 our Offering was \$ 4,157.00

Food Collection:

Today we will have our monthly Food Collection for the needy in our community and as always thank you for your generosity in helping those less fortunate than ourselves.

Tax Statement

Anyone that needs their donation statement for Tax purpose are to stop by the Rectory Office and leave your name and envelope number and we will mail it out to you.

GUIDELINE FOR LENTEN OBSERVANCE

FASTING binds all persons who have completed their 18th birthday through those who have completed their 59th year, unless prevented by poor health. On days of fast, one full meal is allowed. Two other meals sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to one's own needs. Eating meals in between is not allowed although fluid may be taken. (Canon 1252)

ABSTINENCE binds all persons who have completed their 14th birthday, unless prevented by poor health. On days of abstinence during Lent, the consumption of meat of mammals or fowl is not allowed. The Church strongly encourages the observance of Friday abstinence throughout the year, but failure to do so is not regarded as sinful. (Canon 1252)

Prayer Ideas: Read from the Bible each day, pray for someone new from the church/school/work each day. Attend Mass at least once during the week other than Sunday.

Fasting Ideas: Give up a certain/food/drink/ or candy that you love, or give up the computer or TV one day per week, stop eating meals out, give up an activity that wastes your time.

Alms giving/Service Ideas: Volunteer for a local organization, nursing home or hospital.

~ Stations of the Cross ~

- Friday after 12:05pm Mass - Stations of the Cross in English
- Friday at 6:45pm - Stations of the Cross in Arabic
- Friday of 8:00pm - Stations of the Cross in Spanish in our Church. You are all invited!

Sundays Readings:

First Reading: Genesis 2: 7-9; 3:1-7 (22A) p. 42

The Lord God created Adam and Eve and set them in the garden of Eden. They had all they needed, but the serpent tempted them, and they disobeyed God's command.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 51: 3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 17 p. 43 Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Second Reading: Romans 5: 12-19 p. 43 Just as through Adam's disobedience all became sinners, through Christ's obedience all shall become just.

Gospel: Matthew 4: 1-11 p. 44 After Jesus fasted for forty days and nights in the desert, the devil tempted him in three ways. Through all these, Jesus resisted temptation and remained faithful to the Lord God. When the devil left, angles came and ministered to Jesus.

Religious Education

March 2020

3/07/20-Religious Education Classes Meeting for First Communion 11:30am in the School Cafeteria.

3/14/20-Religious Education Classes Children in grades 3—6 will be doing their Reconciliation at 9:30 am.

3/21/20-Religious Education Classes

3/28/20-Religious Education Classes

Parents please remind your children to bring their pink signing sheet to Mass for the priest to sign. Have them study their Prayers.

Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal

Update of 2020 Appeal Goals Goal: \$37,500 Pledged: \$ 9,853.00
Paid: \$9,603.00 Participants: 16 Ave. Gift: \$9,853.00

Thank you so much for your cooperation again towards Cardinal's Appeal. Please, we are still in need of more support in order to reach our parish goal for 2020 as we have been doing.

Lenten Season is a good time to consider giving towards Cardinal's Appeal.

To donate you can go to cardinalsappeal.org, click on Donate, select an amount, and direct your gift to our Church: Immaculate Conception, Yonkers

**Mass Intention for the week of
February 29 to March 8, 2020****Saturday, February 29, 2020:**

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

5:00 pm - Available/Disponibile

7:30pm - Alicea Esperanza Fuentes + * Argentina Fuentes

Sunday, March 1, 2020:

7:30 am - For the Parishioner/ Por los Parroquianos

9:00 am - Margot Navarro + * Ofelia Otero

11:00 am - Juana Vasquez + * Vincente Ruiz

Monday, March 2, 2020:

8:15 am - Angel Luis Jimenez +

12:05 pm - Baby Rory Rodden (Healing) * Mom & Dad

Tuesday March 3, 2020:

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

Wednesday, March 4, 2020:

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Thanksgiving for prayer answered by Bridget Obaseki

Thursday, March 5, 2020

8:15am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

7:00 pm - Juana Vasquez + * Inocente Ruiz

Friday, March 6, 2020:

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

7:00 pm - Sagrado Corazón * Marta Vega

Saturday, March 7, 2020:

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

5:00 pm - Available/Disponibile

7:30pm - Legion De Maria * Laura López

Sunday, March 8, 2020:

7:30 am - For the Parishioner/ Por los Parroquianos

9:00 am - Felipe Reales + * De Su Esposa y Familia

11:00 am - Anna Mikulsky + * Mr. & Mrs. Michael Martin

*+Indicates deceased *Indicates the person (s) who requested the Mass.*

First Friday—Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament In Honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

From 11:00 am 11:45 am, Prayer to the Sacred Heart & Holy Rosary

From 11:45 am 12:00 pm, Confessions

From 12:05 pm—Celebration of the Mass

YOUTH CORNER

The next meeting for the Youth group Saturday March 28, 2020 in the Church Hall from 12:00 pm. ~ 3:00 pm. Parents help to remind your young ones