

The Living Word

First Sunday of Lent, Year A

22 February 2026

First Reading Gn 2:7-9; 3:1-7

Creation of our first parents, and sin.

The Lord God fashioned man of dust from the soil. Then he breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living being.

The Lord God planted a garden in Eden which is in the east, and there he put the man he had fashioned. The Lord God caused to spring up from the soil every kind of tree, enticing to look at and good to eat, with the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden.

The serpent was the most subtle of all the wild beasts that the Lord God had made. It asked the woman, 'Did God really say you were not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?' The woman answered the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden. But of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God said, "You must not eat it, nor touch it, under pain of death".' Then the serpent said to the woman, 'No! You will not die! God knows in fact that on the day you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil.' The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and pleasing to the eye, and that it was desirable for the knowledge that it could give. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She gave some also to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realised that they were naked. So they sewed fig-leaves together to make themselves loin-cloths.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 50:3-6. 12-14. 17. R. see v.3

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

1. Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness. In your compassion blot out my offence. O wash me more and more from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin. (R.)
2. My offences 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. (R.)
3. A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, nor deprive me of your holy spirit. (R.)
4. Give me again the joy of your help; with a spirit of fervour sustain me. O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall declare your praise. (R.)

Second Reading Rom 5:12-19 (or Shorter form Rom 5:12, 17-19)

Where sin increased, there grace abounded all the more.

Sin entered the world through one man, and through sin death, and thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has sinned. Sin existed in the world long before the Law was given. There was no law and so no one could be accused of the sin of 'law-breaking', yet death reigned over all from Adam to Moses, even though their sin, unlike that of Adam, was not a matter of breaking a law.

Adam prefigured the One to come, but the gift itself considerably outweighed the fall. If it is certain that through one man's fall so many died, it is even more certain that divine grace, coming through the one man, Jesus Christ, came to so many as an abundant free gift. The results of the gift also outweigh the results of one man's sin: for after one single fall came judgement with a verdict of condemnation, now after many falls comes grace with its verdict of acquittal. If it is certain that death reigned over everyone as the consequence of one man's fall, it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign in life who receives the free gift that he does not deserve, of being made righteous. Again, as one man's fall brought condemnation on everyone, so the good act of one man brings everyone life and makes them justified. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous

Gospel Acclamation Mt 4:4

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

No one lives on bread alone,

but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

Gospel Mt 4:1-11

Jesus fasted for forty days and nights.

Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves.' But he replied, 'Scripture says:

Man does not live on bread alone
but on every word that comes from the mouth
of God.'

The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down; for scripture says:

He will put you in his angels' charge,
and they will support you on their hands
in case you hurt your foot against a stone.'

Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says:

You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'

Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'I will give you all these', he said, 'if you fall at my feet and worship me.' Then Jesus replied, 'Be off, Satan! For scripture says:

You must worship the Lord your God,
and serve him alone.'

Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.



Reflection by Fr Michael Tate

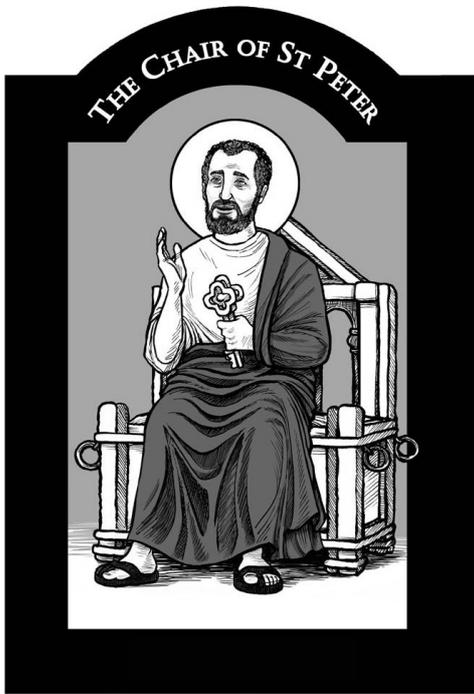
Jesus was offered three shortcuts for his ministry. Firstly, exceptional powers to satisfy his own needs (bread out of stones). Secondly, when he needed to take risks, angels to keep him safe. Thirdly, when he wanted to change the world, absolute political power.

These were the Temptations of Christ, but also for us. If you or I are tempted to sin, we will find the marks of this threefold pattern. We want the whole world to change to satisfy us, or we want to take stupid risks and come out unscathed, or we want to exercise total power over others.

How can we try to follow Jesus without the shortcuts of the fantasy world which the Devil may offer? Note that Jesus resisted each temptation with: 'It is written'. The forty days of Lent are a perfect opportunity to read what 'is written' in the Gospels about the episodes and pattern of the life of Jesus Christ.

We could pause for a moment to find what is written and to imitate what we find. That is how the Devil is defeated.

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The Feast of the Chair of St Peter commemorates St Peter's founding of the Church of Antioch, as well as his role as the first bishop of Rome. The portable chair believed to have been used by St Peter himself is preserved at the Vatican, above the apsidal altar of St Peter's Basilica. In ancient times it was customary for teachers to sit while teaching their students, who would stand around them. Even in the early church, bishops would give the homily seated, with the congregation standing as they listened. And so it is that the celebration of St Peter's Chair is a remembrance of his role as both teacher and bishop.

Join up the fruit to complete the text maze:
 "Lead us not into temptation."



Wordsearch

Try to find these words:



- mountain
- Satan
- stones
- temple
- test
- bread
- city
- desert
- devil
- feet
- food
- forty

C	M	L	J	M	F	U	B	R	E	A	D	E	R	K	O	K
H	X	U	X	E	A	M	Q	L	I	O	L	I	G	U	N	Z
M	H	D	A	P	O	C	U	B	O	P	Y	C	N	Y	J	N
X	O	D	V	F	O	V	N	F	M	S	T	U	L	X	Y	E
Q	T	H	K	R	S	Z	K	E	D	I	I	F	G	R	Y	W
Z	V	L	K	G	W	R	T	G	Z	D	C	G	E	P	N	L
F	O	R	T	Y	K	I	V	D	D	E	V	I	L	P	N	D
X	L	K	S	Z	Y	F	B	W	M	W	J	O	Y	D	N	F
U	W	L	S	N	S	E	C	U	K	R	E	S	A	Y	S	O
G	O	I	Z	X	T	E	T	W	E	S	X	N	M	D	Z	W
J	T	C	J	S	C	T	N	B	F	N	X	D	V	O	S	D
S	S	K	E	M	Y	K	L	O	V	E	W	S	U	F	E	T
W	A	T	Y	H	K	N	I	A	T	N	U	O	M	S	S	C
B	T	D	R	J	F	Q	B	L	D	S	H	Q	E	S	G	Q
F	A	M	F	Y	L	P	X	P	T	O	O	R	B	T	Y	B
N	N	T	Z	B	A	R	Y	X	O	Q	T	C	M	Y	L	U