

February 22, 2026—First Sunday of Lent

St. Paul told us of the state of our relationship with God by referring to Adam. In the Second Reading we heard: **“For by the transgression of the one, (Adam), the many died, how much more did the grace of God and the gracious gift of the one man Jesus Christ overflow for the many.”** In his First Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul refers to Jesus as the “last” or “new” Adam (1 Cor15:45-50). As the new Adam, Jesus has turned everything around for us. Before His sacrifice on the Cross, we were under the rule of sin and death; all seemed hopeless.

The First Reading gave us some verses about the first Adam from chapter 2 and chapter 3 of Genesis. The first chapter in Genesis gives us the big picture of the creation of the universe by God and His crowning work of creating man in His image. The second chapter of Genesis focuses on the creation of Adam and Eve in the beautiful Garden of Eden. The chapter ends by saying, **“the man and his wife were both naked and unashamed.”** There was no lust, no sin in their hearts. Unfortunately, that would change in chapter 3.

God told Adam and Eve that they could eat of the fruit of any tree in the Garden, except from the tree of life and the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil or they would die. Everything was fine until Satan slithered in in the form of a snake. The word used for snake could also be translated as a dragon; surely the devil was fierce and frightening like a dragon! His temptation worked. He made it seem as if God was keeping something good from them and that they shouldn't wait for Him to give it, but they should seize it for their own.

Adam and Eve committed the Original Sin which had some very obvious effects and still does. They didn't die physically, but they did die spiritually. Their relationship as a married couple was damaged immediately. **“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.”** Lust had entered into their hearts, so that the pure love they shared before was no longer there. Love was no longer a self-gift of one to the other. Instead, the constant temptation would be to use the other for selfish reasons.

The second relationship that died that day was between God and man. Sanctifying grace was lost; the close personal friendship that Adam and Eve had with God was no longer there. Satan said, **“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.”** Remember, up until this time they had only known what is good;

from then on, they would also know evil. They would not be gods with a capital “G” but gods with a lower case “g”. In other words, false gods or “no gods” at all. Satan deceived them with a partial truth, which is really a lie.

When the devil tempts us in small or serious matters, he wants us to think that if we disobey the Commandments of God and live as if there was not a God, then we will be happy. **“Do what you want, be a god,”** he tells us. Pride is the sin of the devil and the sin of Adam and Eve. The first Sunday of Lent always tells us about the 40 day fast of Jesus in the desert and the three temptations that He endured. Each of them has pride at its root. In the first one, the devil tempts the starving Jesus to turn the stones into bread to satisfy His hunger. Jesus never used His divine power for His own comfort. The temptation was to use His Divine power for Himself. The devil was saying: “show us what You can do; why should you remain hungry any longer?” Jesus responded humbly, **“Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.”** To do the will of His Father God was like the best of food to Him.

The virtue of humility is the opposite of pride; those who are humble can wait on God’s promises to be fulfilled and are at peace with what He sends, joys and sufferings. At the same time, the humble do not doubt God and the fulfillment of His promises. Humility is the willingness to take up the Cross each day and walk with Jesus. We often don’t know why a loving God permits sufferings to come to us, but humility allows us to look to the cross and be strengthened by the example of Jesus. Meditating on Jesus’ physical sufferings, the rejection and mental anguish He endured, and the sins of the world that He bore to Calvary show us that God has a plan for us too: one that leads to resurrection and life.

We like to know why things happen and find the meaning behind them, but we must face the fact that much of life is a mystery. I just don’t know why this or that happens; I can’t see the meaning. Humility says that even though I don’t know the reason behind these sufferings or those events, I know the One who does know and He is worthy of my trust.

Even the baptized still have what the Church calls concupiscence, the tendency to sin. It often seems very easy to give in to temptation and very difficult to resist them. We have a battle with sin. St. Paul told us that even though the sin of Adam is great, he wrote, **“how much more did the grace of God and the gracious gift of the one man Jesus Christ overflow for the many.”** Lent is calling us to keep

up our battle against sin and not lose heart because the grace of God is with us and it is infinitely more powerful than sin and the devil.