

## First Sunday of Lent

There was a conversation between two people in the fitness center:

Susan: I can't lose weight, no matter how much I work out.

Cathy: Maybe you should give up your late night doughnuts.

Susan: But I get hungry.

Cathy: Eat a banana instead.

Susan: No. Too much sugar.

Dear Friends,

Every human being born on earth are very familiar with an unavoidable word, Temptation. To prove ourselves fit we are tested. We all have experienced temptations, tests, and struggles in our life. No one is exempt from that.

As we start lent to heal our wounds and to reconcile with God, let us think about the process the church encourages us to do. Lent is a season of preparation to have the desert experience in our life.

The readings today help us to think about temptations in our life and how to handle it with the grace of God.

The first reading from the book of Genesis tells the relationship between God and Noah. God desires to be in a relationship with his people through the establishment of a covenant, a permanent bond calling for mutual fidelity. God made covenants with Abraham, Moses and key people to build trust and fidelity. It was Noah's covenant to bring the creation back. These people all spent forty days in preparation to fully receive the promise of new creation.

In the Gospel we read that the spirit drove Jesus to the desert. He stayed there for forty days to have that experience. In Hebrew 4:15 we see that The author of Hebrews used the temptation narrative to show that the Incarnate Son of God wanted to experience human life to the full, except for sin.

What are the temptations we have in life? How do we handle it?

There are some things that cannot be achieved; worrying about the past, comparing ourselves with others and trying to please everyone. Sometimes we have these temptations in our life. As Catholics, we have learned about Jesus in our head, it has never gone to the heart.

The church is asking us to take a serious look at ourselves and ask ourselves how we can be free from our addictions, our lack of charity, our negative attitudes or whatever.

Jesus was tempted and handled with the grace of God. We get the same strength through our baptism. The holy spirit is given to us to fight against all evil and temptations.

Today's focus needs to be on the responses to the temptation. There were two opposite responses to the temptation. The first parents gave into the serpent's attraction. Jesus did not. He faced the temptation with the total dependence on his Father. In the people of Israel's life, they were in the wilderness for forty years, they didn't return to God. Jesus obeyed to God alone. We hear from St. Paul "For Just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so through the obedience of the one the many will be made righteous". Jesus had his total trust in God, the Father. But the first parents didn't. Noah and his family obeyed God completely and stayed forty days in the Ark.

Let us use Lent as a time to fight daily against the evil within us and around us: Repenting and fighting against temptations and evil is a lifetime task. Jesus did not overcome Satan in the wilderness. he achieved that only in his death. Lent reminds us that we have to take up the fight each day against the evil within us and around us, and never give up.