

Homily ~ Lent 1 (A) > February 22, 2026.

As we journey through Lent, the Church invites us into a sacred time of intense spiritual preparation. Lent is not simply about giving up small comforts; it is about preparing our hearts to celebrate Easter with our Risen Lord. For forty days, we walk with Jesus in the desert, learning from Him how to confront and conquer temptation through prayer, fasting, and trust in God.

In the first reading from the Book of Genesis, we hear about the “original temptation.” Adam and Eve were tempted with the words, “You will be like gods.” At the heart of this temptation was the desire to live independently of God - to decide for themselves what is good and what is evil. It was a temptation to mistrust God’s love and to put themselves at the center. Their disobedience brought sin, suffering, and a broken relationship with God.

St. Paul reminds us in his Letter to the Romans that through one man’s disobedience, sin and death entered the world. But he also gives us hope: through the obedience of Christ, we are made righteous. Where Adam failed, Jesus was victorious.

In the Gospel from St. Matthew, we see Jesus in the desert, tempted by the devil. He is tempted to turn stones into bread - to satisfy His hunger in His own way rather than trust the Father. He is tempted to throw Himself from the Temple - to test God instead of trusting Him. He is tempted with power and glory - to worship something other than God. Each time, Jesus responds with the Word of God. He stands firm in obedience and trust.

Dear Ones, we too are tempted - by the devil, by the world, and by our own selfish desires. We are tempted to choose comfort over sacrifice, pride over humility, power over service. But today’s Gospel shows us that temptation is not sin. It is a battle - and with God’s grace, it is a battle we can win.

How? By using the same means Jesus used: prayer, penance, and the Word of God. Lent is our desert experience. It is a time to strengthen our souls. We grow in holiness by finding time each day to be with God in prayer, by participating in Holy Mass, by reading and meditating on Scripture. We seek reconciliation - through the Sacrament of Confession and by forgiving one another. And we practice charity - sharing what we have with those in need.

If we walk this Lenten journey seriously and sincerely, we will not arrive at Easter the same people. We will arrive renewed - stronger in faith, freer from sin, and more deeply in love with God.

May this Lent be a time of victory over temptation, a time of deeper trust, and a time of joyful preparation to celebrate Christ’s triumph over sin and death.