



Christ in Our Neighborhood

February 26, 2023

Prayer

Father, through our observance of Lent, help us to understand the meaning of your Son's death and resurrection, and teach us to reflect it in our lives. Grant this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Commentary

2nd Reading: Romans 5:12-19

Saint Paul comments in his Letter to the Romans about the sin of Adam.

Adam's free will to sin brought about his condemnation and the condemnation of the world. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

Commentary

1st Reading: Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7

The playwright, Oscar Wilde once wrote, "I can resist anything but temptation."

Temptations certainly test our free will, but they don't conquer it. Our free will remains intact, despite our sin.

Our first reading invites us to see the first temptation which gave the world the first (original) sin.

On the one hand, this story reminds us that we had failed to use our God-given free will for the good. On the other hand, despite Adam and Eve's wrong action, we see that free will works. Free will, regardless of our actions (good or bad) gives us our identity as human beings. We aren't robots. We are humans, made in God's image; complete with free will.

The purpose of these readings today is to recognize our identity as human beings. Made in God's image, we may freely will to love God who freely wills to be in communal love with us.

1st Sunday of Lent

Following St. Paul, the Church has always taught that the overwhelming misery which oppresses men and their inclination towards evil and death cannot be understood apart from their connection with Adam's sin and the fact that he has transmitted to us a sin with which we are all born afflicted, a sin which is the "death of the soul". (Catechism, 402).

Thankfully, as Paul also reminds us:

"... just as through one transgression condemnation came upon all, so, through one righteous act, acquittal and life came to all."

God, who wills to love us, gave to us his Son who - like us in all things but sin - wills to love our Father in heaven. Jesus' greatest act of love - death on a cross - conquered Adam's transgression and restored us to life with the Father. Only by God's will to love us are we saved.

Question

In the past week, how have I freely chosen to love God or others?

Question

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, what does "thy will be done" mean to me?

The commentaries over these 6 weeks of Lent are presented by Bishop John Dolan of the Diocese of Phoenix.

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Commentary

Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11

The Gospel of Matthew gives us three temptations that Jesus had to endure in the desert.

The First Temptation: “Command these stones to become bread.” Jesus rebukes Satan with the words, “One does not live on bread alone.”

Jesus will for God is more important than food for a day. As Catholics, we make a free will act of fasting on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday in solidarity with Jesus who is faithful to His Father in Heaven.

The Second Temptation: “Throw yourself down.” Jesus says, “You shall not put your God to the test.”

Jesus freely renounces such a test as a sign of his fidelity and communion with the Father. This Lent calls us to freely place our faith in God.

The Third Temptation: “All this I shall give to you, if you worship me.” Jesus replies, “The Lord your God shall you worship, and him alone shall you serve.”

Jesus freely wills to love God above all things; especially the enticements of this world. Lent calls us to freely abandon the trappings of this world and seek the things of heaven.

Question

In what way am I letting go of the things of this world and freely choosing God?

This Week's Task

Rather than giving up something for Lent, the Church invites us to increase our prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

In what way will I increase my prayer life?

In what way will I empty myself physically (through fasting and abstinence) to make room for God?

In what way will I increase my life of charity?

Group Prayer

The leader invites the group to say the following prayer of St. Ignatius together:

Take, O Lord,
and receive my entire liberty,
my memory, my understanding and my
whole will.

All that I am and all that I possess
You have given me.

I surrender it all to You
to be disposed of according to Your will.

Give me only Your love and Your grace;
with these I will be rich enough,
and will desire nothing more.

Continue with Psalm 51

Psalm

Response: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;
in the greatness of your compassion wipe out
my offense. Thoroughly wash me from my guilt^{SEP} and of my
sin cleanse me.

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

For I acknowledge my offense, and my sin is before me always:
“Against you only have I sinned, and done what is evil in your
sight.”

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew
within me. Cast me not out from your presence, and your Holy
Spirit take not from me.

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Give me back the joy of your salvation, and a willing spirit
sustain in me. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall
proclaim your praise.

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Conclude with an OUR FATHER