

1st Sunday of Lent

Genesis 9:8-15
Ps 25:4-9
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:12-15

Monday February 22
Chair of St. Peter
1 Peter 5:1-4
Ps 23:1-6
Matthew 16:13-19

Tuesday February 23
Isaiah 55:10-11
Ps 34:4-7,16-19
Matthew 6:7-15

Wednesday February 24
Jonah 3:1-10
Ps 51:3-4,12-13,18-19
Luke 11:29-32

Thursday February 25
Ester C:12,14-16,23-25
Ps 138:1-3,7c-8
Matthew 7:7-12

Friday February 26
Ezekiel 18:21-28
Ps 130:1-8
Matthew 5:20-26

Saturday February 27
Deuteronomy 26:16-19
Ps 119:1-2,4-5,7-8
Matthew 5:43-48

Today's Gospel reading shows us the first thing that Jesus did after his baptismal anointing in the Jordan River: He wrestled with temptation.

His baptism had marked the moment of his complete surrender to the Father's will. As he arose from the water, he began a new life of ministry.

The Father responded by telling him that he was very pleased, and the Holy Spirit filled his humanness. Jesus as God already had the Holy Spirit (he and the Spirit were the same God), but Jesus the fully human Son now came fully alive in the Spirit. We can imagine how this experience in the Jordan River gave him the feeling of an elated spiritual high. And the next thing that happens is an attack of the devil.

The same pattern repeats itself in our lives. As soon as we experience new growth in our faith, or a new calling to do the Father's will, we run smack into a situation that tests the strength and sincerity of our faith. However, if this didn't happen, how would we find out that we've spiritually matured? How would we know that we are ready to make a significant difference for the kingdom of God?

Sometimes without consciously thinking it, we decide that if we're going to be tested and we might lose, wouldn't it be better not to start something new? Well, that's another temptation!



Lent is the perfect time to examine the temptations that we face every day and turn them into new growth that will strengthen our faith.

Every time we face a sin and seek God's forgiveness, we become stronger. And if we take it a step farther by walking into the confessional with it, we also receive powerful graces directly from Jesus, through the priest, that will render temptations much more powerless.

And this makes us more useful to God in the mission of conquering evil in the world and helping his kingdom spread into the lives of the people around us.

Think of temptations as blessings in disguise: Use them as opportunities to become more like Jesus and grow powerful in the faith.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. How well do you recognize temptation?
2. How quickly do you rely on the faith that God has given you to say no to the devil's tricks?
3. Describe a time when you experienced a spiritual high and then faced a strong temptation.
4. How did you handle it?
5. What role did (or will) Jesus play in overcoming this temptation?