

First Sunday in Lent – Year A 2019-2020

A Message from Fr. Mark

Dear Parishioners,

Today we start at the beginning, with the first reading of the first Sunday of Lent which begins: *“The LORD God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life...”* Life began with God who spoke and breathed in such a way that it happened and “it was very good.” What happened next was our fault. The problems began when the man and the woman forgot about God who breathed life and listened to the serpent who breathed lies. The serpent told the first lie. It was a lie about God. The serpent said that they shouldn’t trust God because he wanted to prevent them from “being like gods.” The devil said that God was jealous and so he wanted to prevent them from eating the fruit of the tree. The serpent said: *“You certainly will not die! No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods.”*



When they ate it, however, their eyes were opened, and they realized the big mistake they had made. This first lie was the biggest of lies because it was the complete opposite of the truth about God. God wants to give us his life and to make us “*like gods*”. That was God’s plan all along (cf. 1John 3:2). Adam and Eve tried to steal something that God had already promised them. God made us “*in his image*” so that we could “*rule*” with him (Gn. 1:26-28).

The rest is history. Human beings sinned. God sent his Son to save us and restore us as his children. Jesus was tempted also, but he rejected the lies of the devil and kept trusting his father. Lent is a time for us to stop allowing our eyes to wander and to fix on the material things that distract us from God. We make Lenten resolutions to control our eyes, our appetites and our use of social media. We might decide to restrain from sweets, meats, tweets, and treats. As St. Therese said: “Let us keep our eyes fixed on heaven, the only goal of all of our efforts.”

Jesus recommended three ways of focusing on heaven. He said we should pray, fast and give alms. Here in our parish during Lent, there will be opportunities for us to do these things. We fix our eyes on the Lord during Eucharistic Adoration. There will be more opportunities to attend daily Mass and frequent confession. On Fridays, we gather to eat meatless soup and participate in the Stations of the Cross. We can contribute to feeding the poor and supporting the parish and the Bishop’s Ministry Appeal. If you do these things, then you will be “*children of your heavenly father*”, and “*your light shall rise in the darkness!*” (cf. Mt. 5:48; Is. 58:10).

Sincerely,
Fr. Mark