



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY March 5 & BEYOND



One of the reasons I love the Book of Genesis is that it reads like an epic case study on the way sin impacts our relationship with God and our community, and in Sunday's lesson we see how sin first entered the world. The story is familiar: God tells Adam that he's free to eat of every

tree in the garden but one. The serpent convinces Eve that this is unreasonable. Adam and Eve decide to eat the fruit, giving us the basic pattern for how sin always enters the world: (1) sin is proposed, (2) we're either pleased or displeased, and (3) we consent to it or reject it.

Since the pattern for temptation is always the same, we can learn a couple of things that are helpful in resisting it. The first is that our relationship with God must be loving and personal. Eve gets tripped up on the exact wording of the commandment pretty easily, but what causes her to *fall* is believing the lie that God was withholding something good, that he didn't love them as much as he said. Regularly inviting God into our lives through prayer and studying scripture will deepen our relationship, so that when we encounter something that doesn't belong, we're able to sense it more quickly.

This is vital because the other takeaway is that we're not strong enough to fight temptation on our own. Eve never should've let the serpent engage her, though Adam (who's been standing there the whole time!) shows us that inaction isn't the answer either. Are we damned if we do and damned if we don't? Not at all. St. Francis de Sales (d. 1622) taught that the *critical* choice is actually in step 2, deciding whether we're pleased or displeased. Allowing temptation to hang around is playing with fire, so the sooner we can recognize and reject it, the better.

When faced with temptation the best thing we can do is respond like the spiritual children Jesus tells us we must become (see Matthew 18:3-4, Mark 10:14-15). Because they know their weakness, whenever little children feel threatened they're quick to run to whoever makes them feel safe, and St. Ignatius of Loyola (d. 1556) gives us a practical, concrete way to do this. He suggested that whenever we noticed the temptation, we can discretely put our hand over our heart and pray the Jesus Prayer: "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner." Making this a habit is a double blessing, as it not only will help us become more aware of where sin waits for us, but also help us to continually turn and invite Jesus into our lives instead.

Father McQueen

Readings for this Sunday – The First Sunday in Lent

Genesis 2:4b-9, 15-17, 25-3:7 Psalm 51:1-13 Romans 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11

Calendar

SUNDAY: 8:00a Low Mass (Church)
9:30a Bible Study on the Gospel of Matthew (Fireside Room)
10:30a Solemn Mass (Church)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Child care is provided at the 8:00a, 10:30a Mass, Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY: 9:00a Morning Prayer (St. Mary's Chapel)
9:30a Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)
6:00p Stations of the Cross, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament,
Soup Supper

AA Meetings

6:30p Rainbow Bridge (Fireside Room)

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)