



First Sunday of Lent - C

Luke 4:1-12

Dear Friends,

Today we continue our Lenten journey that we began on Ash Wednesday with the command, **“Repent, and believe in the Good News.”** Lent, we need to remember, is a time to free our heart, our mind, and our life to celebrate the great truth of our faith, Jesus crucified, and Jesus risen in the three holy days of the Triduum at the end of Holy Week.

On this first Sunday of Lent, we have the story of Jesus’ temptation. In the story, we have echoes of the temptation of our parents in the Garden and the rebellious followers of Moses in the desert. Contrary to these earlier victories of Satan, Jesus is the victor over the devil.

The temptations all come down to what kind of Messiah Jesus was going to be. The devil offered an attractive expression of a leader who would save the world with the values of the world: power, military might and wonder working aimed at entralling the masses. Jesus chose a different path. Jesus chose to simply share our humanity with all the consequences of being faithful to God in a sinful and unfair world. This would lead to a suffering Messiah, a Messiah of humility and service, not power and privilege. Jesus chose his way of leadership and the power of weakness that was revealed in the washing of the feet after a faithful and fateful journey to Jerusalem.

In his rejection of Satan, Jesus opens up to us the truth of our own lives. We are rooted in and called by a gracious God who has a great plan infinitely better than all the attractions and deceptions of power, pleasure and control that make up the devil’s trickery.

God shows us in Jesus that his love will win out in the end. We need to use this time of Lent to pray, reflect and especially enter into the beautiful selections of the scriptures available to us each weekday and, above all, on the Lenten Sundays. The Church wants to guide us in the faithful footsteps of Jesus. We are invited into the “Jesus game” where you win by losing.

This is the choice Jesus reveals today. The devil is still playing his destructive games. He still calls us with his deceptions wrapped up in the attractions and allurements of the world. They seem like a sure way to happiness and success. Jesus offers another choice. It is a choice that leads to the victory of good over evil, of life over death. We need to keep our eyes on Jesus!