February 26, 2023 | First Sunday of Lent

Gn 2:7-9; 3:1-7 | Rom 5:12-19 | Mt 4:1-11

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Superbowl Sunday was two weeks ago, and many of us were more likely interested in the commercials than the actual game. After all, companies pay a ton of money to have their products paraded in front of us, and – in theory at least – take the time to make these particular ads memorable and funny. If we can be convinced that we will be better people, or our social outings greater and filled with more laughter, we will buy what they are selling. It's the modern version of the words of the serpent in today's first reading: if you eat this, "you will be like gods"! Today's readings are a reminder that we are all sinners and burdened by being vulnerable to false promises – but also that we are relieved of this burden through one man: Jesus Christ. If we tend to forget that the most important part of our salvation story is that it is full of more grace and forgiveness than we can comprehend, this first Sunday of Lent is a good time to prayerfully ponder this. If God seems far away or distant, let us recall that he loved us so much that he breathed our very life into us, and then gave his only begotten Son to us that we might have life eternally. All he asks in return is for us to accept this gift and follow in his footsteps. Lent is the time to be mindful of grace-filled opportunities that draw us closer to God.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Let's think about these 40 days. In addition to allowing us to grow in understanding of God, this time is also an opportunity to grow in our understanding of how we can be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world and help to build the kingdom right here and now. How can we keep God at the center of our lives and resist worldly temptations to push him aside? Perhaps today's psalm can help us here: Ask for God's mercy, acknowledge our offenses, seek a "clean heart," renew a "steadfast spirit" within us, and ask God to grant us a "willing spirit" to give him praise. And remember Christ's words from the Gospel: Depend on "every word that comes forth from the mouth of God," which is love and mercy.

PRAY Pray today's psalm: "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."