

Lent 1 – Year A

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

Matthew 4:1-11

Lent is a complicated season. It is a season for reflection and penitence, spiritual decluttering, and inspiring the giving up of certain goods for the greater good.

Lent is also the season of simplicity. The season of getting back to basics, of spiritual focus, of going from the worship of many things to the worship of the One True Thing.

Lent is also a season of mindfulness, in which we are invited to practice our own examination of conscience. Lent invites us to ask whether our values and actions are moving us closer or further from God's vision for our lives and the world to become God's companions in healing the earth, and this means action as well as contemplation.

On this note WHAT WILL WE CHOOSE? Is important. The heart of the Old Testament reading involves the twin realities of mortality and decision-making. Their lives evolve from being "naked and unashamed" to recognizing the vulnerability of nakedness. This "fall" makes their lives more complicated, yet the complexity opens the door to new possibilities. So, they live with the consequences of the decision made.

THE WILDERNESS JOURNEY. Jesus goes to where the wild things are and discovers the wild things are internal as well as external. Jesus' journey into the wilderness points to the importance of mindfulness in the spiritual journey. Fresh from his mystic experience following his baptism – and the affirmation "you are my beloved child" – Jesus goes into the wilderness for a retreat to discern his vocation.

He is God's beloved one, endowed with much power and energy. Like Adam and Eve, his power can create or destroy. If Jesus is tempted by valuable and worthy things – power, security, and sustenance – all of which can destroy us if we turn from God's vision for our lives.

Jesus' response to the temptation is an exercise in simplicity and mindfulness. He is aware of temptation, but he takes it to God in prayer. He places God's vision at the heart of his decision-making and is able to use his temptations as a way of finding his true vocation.

Lent reminds us of the need to put first things first, and the first thing is God. Lent also reminds us to fast and feast on certain things. When we seek God's realm first, we cultivate simplicity and self-awareness and awaken for God's way amid life's many possibilities.

Let's commit ourselves to a **fast** that's about rending our hearts and not our garments....

And let us look for ways to **feast** more deeply on the goodness of God....

- Let us fast from lethargy and anxiety and feast on whatever brings us energy, enthusiasm, and self-confidence....
- Let us fast from emphasis on differences and Feast on the unity of life
- Let us fast from anger and being negative and

- Feast on patience and being positive
- Let us fast from bitterness and
Feast on forgiveness
 - Let us fast constant activity and
Feast on slowing down
 - Let's fast from judging others and
Feast on the Christ within them....
 - Let us fast from hostility and bitterness and
feast on forgiveness and compassion...
 - Let us fast from self-concern and
Feast on meeting the needs of others...
 - Let us fast from envy and discontent and
Feast on the blessings in our lives with gratitude...
 - Let us fast from dwelling on past hurts and disappointments
and
feast on all that brings wholeness and hope for the future...

AMEN