

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

In the first reading of today we see the story of Creation ending with the temptation and sin of Adam and Eve.

God created Adam and Eve with love and he created them in a unique way and gave them a happy life in the Garden. However, God wanted them to trust his plans of love for them and observe them, for away from him they could not live, they would surely die, hence his command to them not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Adam and Eve not wanting to be who they were, human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, yielded to the enticement of the Serpent with the intention to become just like God so they ate the fruit of the forbidden tree.

The point is, they allowed the devil to induce them to reject their identities as creatures and friends of God and they bought his idea that they could become competitors of God.

The lesson here is that as human beings and as Christians we should always remember our proper relationship with God: creatures and friends of God and we must always act as such. Drifting from this relationship will render us 'naked', that is, powerless and miserable as Adam and Eve experienced after the Fall.

Jesus in the gospel reading remembered his proper relationship with his Father; an obedient and beloved son when he was being tempted by the devil.

Matthew, in the gospel, tells us that Jesus' forty days and nights of fasting in the desert were followed by temptations.

The devil appealed to Jesus' self-identity. He twice questioned Jesus' sense of identity: **"If you are the Son of God....."**

The devil wanted Jesus to betray his vocation as son of God and his trust in God. In other words, he challenged Jesus to use his divine sonship for strictly personal benefit instead of using it to do the will of God.

Jesus who did not want the devil to drift him from his proper relationship from his father resisted the temptations.

In the first temptation he told the tempter that the obedience to God's word was something for which he would hunger and thirst.

In the second temptation he told the devil that he would not turn his own experience of testing into the pretext for testing God, his father.

In the third and the final temptation Jesus did not surrender himself to the Lordship of the "ruler of the world".

In the end Jesus proved himself the loyal son of God.

Lent is a special period in which the Church invites us to reflect on how we stand in terms of our relationship with God.

Every day of our lives we face temptations that question our sense of identities as Christians. That is, as Christians temptations of all kinds drift us from God and our Christians principles. But since our God is merciful and away from him we are powerless and miserable, the Church is calling us to renew our relationship with him. To do so, in the today's gospel reading, the Church wants us to learn from Jesus, the new Adam, how he was able to overcome his tempter. In the face of temptation let us be obedient to the word of God and we should not turn our experience of testing into a pretext for testing God and by so doing we will not surrender ourselves to the Lordship of the " ruler of this world".

St Paul tells us in the second reading that through Christ we can truly become the creatures God intended from the beginning; that is, living in right relationship to God. So in this Lent let us persevere in our observances which will lead us to have this right relationship.