

Homily for the 1st Sunday in Lent

February 29 – March 1, 2020

Readings: Genesis 2: 7-9; Romans 5: 12-19; Matthew 4: 1-11

Preacher: Donna Ecker

I heard a rumor about a reporter who was doing a story on the day-to-day operation of the Vatican. While Pope Francis was meeting with her, she asked him, “Holy Father, how many people work in the Vatican?” With a glint in his eyes and a smile on his lips, he responded, “Well, I would guess about half of them.”

Although this is a funny little story, it did get me to thinking about the Season of Lent we have just entered. I’ve been asking myself this:

I work on my spiritual life.....but maybe only half the time?

I worship and honor God.....but maybe part of the time?

I love my family, my friends, my co-workers....but maybe not all the time?

On this first Sunday of Lent, the Church asks us to take stock of the way we have been loving God, neighbor and self and to make a conscious choice to do better.

Our readings today are about CHOICE, we choose our actions and are responsible for the outcomes.

The first reading from Genesis uses the familiar story of Adam and Eve in the Garden to make us aware of the results of choosing between good and evil.

The gospel reading from Matthew is a powerful message about the choice of good over evil as Jesus faced real temptations. He faces the power of evil, yet accepted testing and made the conscious choice to deny evil and bear the responsibility of good.

The reading from St. Paul makes clear that the choice and responsibility of Jesus carries with it a special effect. That through his chosen action and chosen course in life, we have the gift of God's presence and power.

We have been the recipients of the gift of God's presence and power through our Baptism. So, in this holy season of Lent, we get to make choices and take responsibility for them. Do we want to be part-time or full-time Christians? Do we want to make better choices on loving God and neighbor? Are we willing to accept responsibility for the decisions we make when we are tempted?

This week is the first week of Lent but it is also the first week of the rest of our lives. Each day is filled with choices. Choose well.