

First Sunday of Lent 2020

My beloved brothers and sisters, we are reminded of the greatest sin that has ever been done by human beings, and the terrible consequences of that sin; however, we are also reminded of the incredible mercy of God, who not only overcomes the sin and its consequences, but also responds with infinite generosity to it!

We often think in our poor fallen world, that the greatest sins are the sins of the flesh, and indeed, lust is one of the deadly sins; however, the worst sin of human beings is self-idolatry, the sin of pride. It is the sin of denying the Lordship of God over the whole of my life and all of my decisions and deciding to make of myself my own God, choosing my way, my desires ahead of God—and look at the misery it has brought into the world! We have received from God the grace, the gift of free will to decide, but we have also been given the responsibility of being able to decide. We are free to choose, but to choose apart from God, is to choose misery and death, not only for myself, but for the whole world. It is like a pebble thrown into a calm lake; both my choices for good, and my choices for evil, ripple out from the center to the whole of the lake!

All three of the readings for the day remind us, however, the mercy and gift of God are infinitely, infinitely greater than all of the harm we have done! Adam and Eve had the very life of God breathed into them by God Himself. We are wholly the work of God, from the dust of the earth—that is why every Ash Wednesday we are reminded of this reality—dust unto dust! God has brought me into being for His love of me! God created a paradise, a home with Him of perfect and eternal love, as His beloved child. The evil one despoiled all that God had planned and made them doubt that God really loved them that much, and they chose the greatest of evils: I want to be my own God, rather a child of God in the perfect order of will for my purpose and my being! Their choice had an immediate effect—they chose death apart from God, rather than life with God! And like I inherited my bald head from my grandfather, so we inherited the works of death!

But God's will would not be inhibited by the plan of the evil one. God chose to defeat the evil one and his plans, by not only restoring to us His Divine Friendship,

but by giving us His Divine Life, by bringing us into the very life of the Trinity itself—that is the meaning of the Incarnation, death and Resurrection of Jesus! That is who God is, and how we are meant to be! Adam, as the husband, had an actually greater responsibility, (in the mind of Judaism); he brought misery and death. But the new Adam- Jesus Christ brought infinite grace- we are redeemed, saved, and by Baptism, incorporated into the very life of God!

Jesus, in the Gospel for today shows us how we are to live this great gift: He restores the primacy of God's word, over fallen human nature: "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God!" Jesus is that living word! He calls us to let Him shape our every decision and desire. Jesus restores the primacy of God's Divine Providence and protection for us: "I will live in God's protection; I don't need to prove it, because I trust Him!" Jesus restores the primacy of God's will over the whole of creation and our lives: "God alone is God, I will not fall down before anything or anyone but my Father alone!"

Today, Jesus teaches us the way to true happiness and true life. He says to us: "observe faithfully the first of my rules for holiness and happiness: complete abandonment to my will—and I will lead you also into the second rule, which is to be what I desire and created you to be!" "Be my beloved child! That is why I created you!" He has created us for the same oneness that He Himself has with the Father and the Holy Spirit! That's it, it's very simple: Lord, I want what You will and I will what you will. Amen!