

Dear Friends in Christ,

The origin of the word Lent is interesting. It is from Old English *Lengten*, Middle English *Lenten* both meaning Spring and further, are derived from words having to do with the lengthening of daylight hours. It seems to be a continuing of this "Light" motif. LIGHT, Jesus, is celebrated as coming into the world when the world is at its darkest (at least in the northern hemisphere). So Lent is observed as more and more light is coming into the world. Even Easter is always celebrated after the Spring Equinox so there are more than 12 hours of light.

Lent is a season of penitence and fasting and if you attend church on Ash Wednesday you will hear an invitation to a Holy Lent which I can not improve upon so I won't even try.

But I will reflect. I think we should be slowing down, being less frenetic and more thoughtful and reflective. We are told to repent which literally means turning around, "doing a 180". Sometimes we must do that concerning particular attitudes. However, I think most who read this are already heading in the right direction and a "180" would be counter productive but "mid-course corrections" are always in order.

The fasting, if we are consciences of what we are doing can be a little daily reminder of Christ's suffering and what we, as Christians should be about in our daily lives.

Thoughtful reading is always useful. St. Philips folk are working on *The Confessions of St. Augustine* for their Lenten program. Augustine is a "heavy dude"! And the readings are:

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## FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT Year A – RCL

### **Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7**

*Some folk see this story as reflecting the change from hunting & gathering – living off the bounteous excess of nature to farming. That may or may not be the case. The writers and compilers of Hebrew Scripture certainly were not thinking that but were trying to make theological points and explain the "isness" of things. Why is things as they is? Why, on this wonderfully productive Earth, is life so hard? Why, in this good creation, is there sin and pain?*

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, `You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, `You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

1. So what was Eve's temptation?

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2. Why do you think Adam went along with Eve? God said he would die if he ate the fruit.

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3. Did they die after eating the fruit? \_\_

a. Did God lie? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Psalm 32

*A psalm of David, thanksgiving for healing.*

1. Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, \* and whose sin is put away!

to you in time of trouble; \* when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.

2. Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt, \* and in whose spirit there is no guile!

8. You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble; \* you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

3. While I held my tongue, my bones withered away, \* because of my groaning all day long.

9. "I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go; \* I will guide you with my eye.

4. For your hand was heavy upon me day and night; \* my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.

10. Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding; \* who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay near you."

5. Then I acknowledged my sin to you, \* and did not conceal my guilt.

11. Great are the tribulations of the wicked; \* but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.

6. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." \* Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

12. Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD; \* shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

7. Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers

1. How did his guilt afflict the psalmist? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What is the effect of admitting his guilt? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Romans 5:12-19

*Paul is trying to reconstruct Hebrew Scripture with Jesus.*

As sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned-- sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the

transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

1. How did sin and death come into the world? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Then what? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How have we been saved? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. And who has been saved? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Matthew 4:1-11**

*In Mark's version, Jesus is driven into the wilderness by the Spirit. Keep in mind, that the devil or Satan is also referred to as the "Prince of this World".*

After Jesus was baptized, he was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written,

'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

*Jesus knows he has the "the Power". Jesus knows as we do that. "power corrupts". Being human, he has decide how to use his power.*

1. After fasting for along time, what is the harm of turning stones into bread? What is the real temptation? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. What is the temptation of the jumping off the temple peak trick? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. So what is the temptation of getting all the nations of the world under Jesus control?  
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Don't you secretly wish Jesus had faked worshiping Satan, you know, cross his fingers behind his back when he bows down. Then Jesus could rule the world and make it really nice.