

First Sunday of Lent_A

February 22, 2026

St. Edward's Parish (Saturday only)

Friends, this first Sunday of Lent invites us to consider the mystery of sin and its remedy. When I say a 'mystery' I mean that sin is something we cannot comprehend by reason alone. Our best human science cannot fully reveal why our world, our society, and our own hearts are so disordered, nor do we fully comprehend the seriousness of sin and what it does to us. The first reading today from the Book of Genesis recounts the origin of sin and reveals profound truths about who we are and what has gone wrong. Let us take a brief look at this.

First, the account tells us that God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed life into him. This is not intended to be a description of the origins of life in the modern scientific sense, but it reveals even deeper truths about our existence and purpose. Our life is not merely the result of random chemical and physical processes; rather we are created. God's hand guided us into existence, and He imparted something of His own 'breath' into us. We are made in His image and likeness. Human life, therefore, is infused from the beginning with meaning and purpose and we are created to live in relationship with God. This is a very important point—if we want to know the purpose of our lives we must look to the creator. Without God, true purpose and meaning vanish.

Next, after creating human life, God established a law, "You may freely eat of every tree in the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat of it you shall die." This sounds like a strange law. What is so bad about knowledge of good and evil? It seems this is not about simply knowing right from wrong but taking for ourselves the authority to determine what is good and evil. Our moral guidance must come from God; we cannot make up our own. This remains an ongoing temptation, especially today.

Third, we see a major turning point—the serpent enters. This is Satan or the devil. Where does he come from? We understand that Satan was created as one of the highest angels, but out

of pride He willingly turned from God and is relentlessly trying to disfigure God's creation. Satan has no power to make us sin; instead, he lures us to use our own free will to choose what is wrong. The sin of Adam and Eve begins, therefore, like every sin, with a temptation. The serpent presents disobedience toward God as something attractive: "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." This is an ongoing battle for us both individually and as a society. Satan presents what is evil as attractive, and he tempts us to use our free will to disobey God's law and follow our own will.

Finally, we see the disorder that follows. A little further on we read that Adam and Eve lose their close friendship with God, they hide themselves, they blame each other, their relationship with the earth becomes strained. Their son Cain kills their other son Abel, and a long story of disorder follows, which echoes down to us today. This is what we call *original sin*—a sin at the origin of humanity that affects us all. Since the time of Adam and Eve we are prone to temptation and disobedience. Original sin is a doctrine we can all grasp by experience. We can observe the world and our own lives and easily grasp that things are not as they ought to be.

Let us now briefly turn to the Gospel because there is good news. The Gospel for the First Sunday of Lent is always the Temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. It would require a separate homily to cover each temptation in detail. But notice that the first thing Jesus does after His baptism is face the temptations of Satan. Jesus, having taken on our human nature, goes back to undo the root of all sin. Where Adam and Eve had fallen, Jesus now conquers. Jesus defeats the temptations of Satan and opens a way forward for us to follow in His footsteps. The season of Lent invites us to take up spiritual weapons against sin and temptation such as fasting, prayer, and almsgiving so that we may conquer with Jesus and more deeply live in the holiness and freedom and that God intended for humanity in the beginning.