

Fr. Jeff's Weekly Homily

**1st Sunday of Lent
February 10, 2008**

READING 1: Genesis 2:9, 3:1-7

The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it;

Psalm 51

For I acknowledge my offense

READING 2: Romans 5:12-19

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so, through the obedience of the one, the many will be made righteous.

GOSPEL: Matthew 4:1-11

"All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me."

St. John wrote: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8) So at the risk of distressing your digestion, let me lead into Lent by speaking of sin. Because, unless we speak of sin we can not speak sensibly of Easter, of resurrection, of Jesus Christ—even of ourselves. But what is a contemporary scenario for sin? I mean a scenario that weds intelligence with faith; our experience with reality. I think the notion of temptation provided in our familiar readings from Genesis and our Gospel provide the connection.

How often have we gone for what was appealing to the eye, like Eve, and lost sight of our best selves? How many times have we been faked out by the good time and missed the opportunity for happiness? How many times in our lives have we made choices without thinking about the consequences?

If you walked into a friend's house, and your friend set out this bowl of sugar, how many of us would gladly eat some? But, If your friend set out this bowl of M&Ms, how many of us would gladly eat some? When the devil tempts us, he puts sinful ways right in front of us [point to the bowl of sugar]. However, he knows that in order for us to sin, he has to make it attractive [point to the bowl of M&Ms].

Do you know people in credit card debt over their heads? When they were spending, do you think they thought for a moment about bill collectors calling them? You don't

think that is sin? Consider the arguments, the anxiety, the insecurity and stress tearing families apart. Consider how the innocent hearts of the youngsters will pick up that anxiety, stress and insecurity and carry it into their lives and their marriages. The purchases were heavenly, but we know it is sin because the consequences are hell.

I could add so many other contemporary scenarios of sin; but you get the idea. You can think of your own scenarios of sin. The difference between us and Jesus Christ is that He could see past the allure and recognize temptation's consequences. The devil makes sin very attractive when we are prospects; the consequences come after we are his customers.

We want to see sin for what it is, for what it does, so that we will choose joyously for the opposite: choose for love, for life, for health, for Christ. Lent is a time to refresh our sense of reality and rebuild our strength to face the challenges and temptations of our lives so we can proclaim the Good News of Easter, resurrection, Jesus Christ and our own selves!

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