

The Temptations of Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Lent (1st Sunday of Lent, Year A)

Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7—The Creation and Fall of Man and Woman

1. The LORD formed “man” (Hb *'adam*) from the “dust from the ground (*'adamah*)”
2. The Trees in the “Garden” (Gk *paradeisos*): “Tree of Life” and “Tree of Knowledge”
3. The Serpent to the Woman: “You will be like God/gods” (Hb *'elohim*)
4. 3 Reasons for Fall: (1) good for food, (2) delight to the eyes, (3) desirable for wisdom
5. Note: Adam is “with” the Woman when she falls
6. Effects: shame of sin; “loincloths” out of “fig leaves”; ultimately, death (cf. Gen 3:19)

Psalm 51—Be Merciful O Lord, for We Have Sinned

1. “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin” (v. 2, 4)
2. Cf. v. 5: “I was brought forth in iniquity; in sin did my mother conceive me”
3. Desire for a “clean heart” and possession of the “Holy Spirit” (v. 10-11)

Romans 5:12-19—Original Sin, Adam a “Type” of Christ

1. “Sin” came into the world “through one man” = Adam
2. Typology: Adam a “type” of Christ: sin → condemnation; grace → justification

Matthew 4:1-11—The Three Temptations of Jesus

1. Setting: Jesus “fasted” in “the wilderness/desert” (not a Garden)
2. Why 40 Days and 40 Nights? Testing, purification, preparation
 - a. Noah’s Flood (Gen 7-8) and Moses on Sinai (Exod 24)
 - b. Israel (Exod 16:35) and Elijah in Desert (1 Kings 19)
3. Why These Three Temptations? Jesus is recapitulating the Fall of Adam

<i>Fall of Adam</i>	<i>Triple ‘Lust’</i>	<i>Three ‘P’s’</i>	<i>Jesus</i>
1. <u>Good for Food</u>	Lust of the Flesh	Pleasure	Turn stones into bread
2. <u>Delight to Eyes</u>	Lust of the Eyes	Possessions	All kingdoms of world
3. <u>Make One Wise</u>	Pride of Life	Pride	<i>If you are Son of God</i>
(Genesis 3)	(1 John 2:16)	(CCC 377)	(Matt 4:1-11)

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18—Ash Wednesday Gospel Explained

1. Fasting: “When you Fast...” Lust of the Flesh/Pleasure
2. Almsgiving: “When you give alms...” Lust of the Eyes/Possessions
3. Prayer: “When you pray...” Pride of Life/Power

The *Catechism*: the Temptations of Jesus and the Meaning of Lent

1. Jesus’ temptations “recapitulate the temptations of Adam in Paradise” (CCC 538)
2. 40 Days of Lent: Church “unites herself” to “the mystery of Jesus in the desert”

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (1st Sunday of Lent, Year A)

1. Had you ever noticed the three reasons for the Fall of Adam and Eve (Gen 3:1-7)? Think of specific examples of sins and ask yourself: in which of the three ‘lusts’—pleasure, possessions, pride—are they rooted?

2. Most Christians think of Jesus as the divine Son of God, the long-awaited king of Israel, the Savior of the world. But what about Jesus as the New Adam? How does Jesus’ identity as the New Adam affect the way you see his mission?

3. If Jesus overcame the triple concupiscence in the desert, what does that mean for us? How can we better make Lent about *all three* spiritual disciplines: (1) fasting (overcoming the lust of the flesh); (2) almsgiving (overcoming the lust of the eyes); and (3) prayer (overcoming the pride of life)? What are some practical ways to bring our practice of Lent more into line with Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount?

For Further Study: Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving

1. Fasting: Saint Basil the Great. *On Fasting and Feasts*. New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2013. A classic treatise on fasting by one of the Doctors of the Church.
2. Almsgiving: John Chrysostom, *On Wealth and Poverty*. New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1999. A classic treatise on the role of wealth in the lives of Christians, by a doctor of the Church.
3. Prayer: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2558-2665. Easily the most beautiful section of the Catechism, this is one of the greatest, clearest, most beautifully written introductions to prayer ever penned.
4. Brant Pitre, *The Temptations of Jesus and the Fall of Adam* (CD Bible study, available at the CatholicProductions.com online store).