



# Bringing Home the Word

First Sunday of Lent (A)  
February 26, 2023

## Try It! You'll Like It!

By Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

If only temptation was obvious, we might have a better chance of avoiding it. But sometimes it's so subtle. It often disguises itself as something rather attractive. This is precisely what happened in the Garden of Eden. Scripture says temptation takes on a living form—a serpent that convinces the woman that the fruit of the wisdom tree will make them “like gods, who know good and evil” (Genesis 3:5).

Who wouldn't jump at such a possibility? Actually, who hasn't already fallen into that trap—acting as if we are God, thinking we know everything or wishing to be in complete control? Our

faith certainly encourages us to become more and more like God. What made that desire wrong was the way Adam and Eve sought to become like gods in their own way, not God's way.

The Gospel passage tells us that Jesus also was tempted. Who doubts that Jesus wanted to be successful in his ministry? But what would he do to ensure success? Would he use divine power to attract a following? No! Would he call upon God to protect him from misunderstanding, rejection, even physical harm? No! Would he bargain with the devil, who obviously exercised power over many people? No! That was not the way he would be the Messiah. Unlike the couple in the Garden, Jesus recognized what was wrong even when it was disguised as something good. How good are we at recognizing temptation in our lives? †

## Sunday Readings

**Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7**

The snake said to the woman: “You certainly will not die! God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened.”

**Romans 5:12-19 or 5:12, 17-19**

Through one righteous act acquittal and life came to all.

**Matthew 4:1-11**

Jesus answered [the devil], “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.’”

***Temptation often disguises itself as something rather attractive.***



## A Word from Pope Francis

Please: No dialogue with the devil! We must not enter into dialogue with temptation, we must not fall into that slumber of the conscience that makes us say: “But after all, it's not serious, everyone does it!” Let us look at Jesus, who does not seek compromises, he does not make agreements with evil.

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## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- During this Lent, should I seek help with a particular temptation?
- What resolution will help me love God more?



# Homeward Bound

By Paige Byrne Shortal

On the first Sunday of Lent we hear about Jesus preparing for his ministry by going out into the desert and being tempted by the devil. Some years ago, my middle son, upon hearing that Jesus was offered the power to turn stones into bread, mumbled under his breath that Jesus should have taken the deal. I was shocked—not so much at what he said, but that he was listening at all. Before he could lapse back into his usual teenage taciturnity, I asked him to explain. He said, in that voice reserved for parents and idiots, that there is a lot of hunger in the world. Point well taken.

What would be so wrong with taking the deal? Three times Satan offers Jesus power. First, power over hunger: A man who can turn stones into bread need never be hungry again. He could feed the world. He could feed all those little children whose faces haunt us, stretching out their bowls for their one poor meal a day.

Second, political power over the kingdoms of the world: This is the power we long for when we say, “If I were the president.... If I were the pope....” Think of how much good you could do!

Third, power even over death and the suffering that precedes death: Don’t we all seek this power in some way?

Jesus’ response is always the same: *God is my only God*. The devil’s way is to do big things in a big way. God’s way seems to be to do the next little thing—to feed the one person placed on our path, not the whole world; to do the good it is in our power to do, not to long for more power; to accept the powerlessness of suffering and death.

The sustenance of the disciple is supposed to be the word of God. We are to devour it as a hungry child devours bread. We are to listen to the gospel like passengers stranded at an airport, on the edge of their seats, straining to hear every announcement, desperate for word of how and when they’ll finally get home. Too often, I listen to the readings as I do the stories of a garrulous old uncle—outwardly polite, but thinking of other things because, no offense, I’ve heard this story before.

Or have I?

A little girl heard the parable of the sheep and goats and Jesus’ astonishing identification with the poor—what we do for the least ones, we do for him. Her startled response was, “Do other Catholics know about this?” Her question echoes the words of John Carr, former Secretary of the Department of Social Development and World Peace for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. In a talk on the social doctrine of the church, he said that this parable is the only place in the gospel where Jesus tells us what we need to do to get into heaven. (You want to go read it now, don’t you? It’s Matthew 25:31–46.)

I need Lent. I need the desert of quiet where I can hear God’s word like I’ve never heard it before. I need to listen like a weary, travel-worn passenger who wants to find her way home. †



*So that we may observe Lent with fasting, prayer, and sharing with those in need, we pray—Lord, let us be like you.*

The Redemptorists

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## WEEKDAY READINGS

February 27—March 4

**Monday, Lenten Weekday:**  
Lv 19:1–2, 11–18 / Mt 25:31–46

**Tuesday, Lenten Weekday:**  
Is 55:10–11 / Mt 6:7–15

**Wednesday, Lenten Weekday:**  
Jon 3:1–10 / Lk 11:29–32

**Thursday, Lenten Weekday:**  
Est C:12, 14–16, 23–25 / Mt 7:7–12

**Friday, Lenten Weekday:**  
Ez 18:21–28 / Mt 5:20–26

**Saturday, Lenten Weekday:**  
Dt 26:16–19 / Mt 5:43–48

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