

Lent 1st Sunday, C Cycle SUNY Oneonta Feb 14, 2016

1st Reading: Deuteronomy 26:4-10 [My father was a wandering Aramean who went down to Egypt]

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 91 "Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble."

2nd Reading: Romans 10:8-13 [Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved]

Gospel: Luke 4: 1-13 [Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted]

♪ O let all who thirst, let them come to the water.

And let all who have nothing, let them come to the Lord.

Without money, without price, why should you pay the price except for the Lord. ♪

[Peter] Jesus was hungry and thirsty - he had not eaten for 40 days, and he was alone in the desert. The Gospel says, "He was hungry." I would be too, wouldn't you?

He knew the words of the song I played - words spoken by Isaiah, a prophet of Israel. And Jesus was a believing Jew. In the Gospel today, we see him putting his trust in God, in his true Father, even though his hunger and thirst made him vulnerable to temptation. He chose to come to the water - to trust in the Lord, his God, rather than the logic of Satan. [and the devil can be very logical]

There is a wonderful acronym I learned from 12 step groups, the letters are H.A.L.T. They stand for **Hungry, Angry, Lonely and Tired**. Whenever I am any of those, I am a target for temptation. Jesus was not only **hungry**, he was **alone** in the desert, **tired** from his fast and the heat, and **angry** at the devil quoting the Bible to trick him.

Satan confronted Jesus with the values of the world, values that still infect the cultures of our world, our corporate culture and the culture of the campus. All three temptations are about this: **[remote control]**.

The devil says, *you can have control over matter,*
use your divine technology to change this stone into bread.

Then he says, *you can have power over the world and its people, all you have to do is to sell your soul and worship me by putting power and control ahead of people and compassion.*

Finally, he says: *you can be the center of everyone's attention. All you have to do is jump off the Temple and look good for the media.*

We, like Jesus are tempted to make a god of comfort and security & pleasure. We are tempted to destroy the land, the water, the air and plant and animal life so we can eat so much that we risk a heart attack.

The word of God that Jesus knew and lived calls us to care for ourselves, each other and the earth the way God loves us and cares for the earth he created.

We are tempted to ignore the hungry and the poor, and to use other people to get what we want. To treat people like objects that are there for our pleasure & entertainment. Some even abuse the vulnerable, thinking that power and authority places us above the law of love.

We are tempted to believe the gospel of greed that is preached by so many commercials and movies, and to close our eyes to how the wealth of a few denies medicine and even food to many. We are tempted to dominate and exploit the earth, rather than being good stewards of the gifts of food and life that God has given us.

We are tempted to make a god of our own ego, that small part of our self that cries out to be the center of the universe. There's another acronym I have heard that says that ego really stands for **E**ase **G**od **O**ut. We can focus on our ego so much that we forget our true selves, we can forget that we are sons and daughters of God our Father and so forget to act like the children of God that we are.

[Anna]: Today's Mass and the whole season of Lent is a gift, a chance to respond to the temptations which are all around us, and even inside us. A chance to respond the way Jesus did, even when we are hungry, angry, lonely or tired.

Sometimes we are led to believe that the Gospel message is about avoiding sin and overcoming temptation, but the season of Lent is about the amazing grace of the mercy of God. I read some beautiful words recently about grace and mercy.

They are from a meditation by a Franciscan, Fr. Richard Rohr.

*"Love has two lovely daughters, twins called grace and mercy.
Like identical twins, they are often indistinguishable: Grace is the inner freedom to be merciful.
Mercy is grace in action. And both are the children of love."*

Are you **hungry** for love, for affirmation, for mercy? Those gifts have been given to us by Christ, all we need to do is take time to reflect on the message of Jesus. We can be filled with the love of God, the mercy of Jesus once we realize that we have been given the same Spirit that was given to him at his baptism.



That Gospel message in the mouth of our friend, Ami the Toad ,

"God Loves you, warts & all."

Are you **tired** of the world the way it is? of the old patterns of sin in yourself and our culture? Come to the Eucharist and receive new energy to live, to forgive, to change what needs to be changed in yourself and the world around us.

Come to a celebration of Reconciliation - to a communal service or with an individual priest - and be forgiven. Reach out to those whom you have hurt, or who have hurt you and be reconciled with one another.

The sacrament of Reconciliation is not so much about what **we** have done, or failed to do - it's not primarily about sin - it is about what God does. And, as our friend Sam the skunk



says, *"Jesus forgives me, even when my sins stink!"*

Are you **Angry** with your own limits or with the attitudes preached by the culture of **me first**? Come and be healed & strengthened to change the world, one life at a time. Come and begin to live the song, 🎵 "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me." 🎵

Are you feeling alone and powerless? Come and join in the mission to spread the Good News of God's love, mercy and peace by treating each other the way you want to be treated and reaching beyond your comfort zone to serve the vulnerable and powerless.

[Peter] As we enter into Lent, we know that we will face temptation as Jesus did, and that without the help of the Spirit of Jesus and the love of our friends we will give in. But what is more important than the reality of temptation and the truth that we are all sinners, is that we are beloved children of a God who loves us more than even our human fathers & mothers do.

What is most important is the mercy and grace of **God**. Admitting that we are sinners and subject to temptation is the door that lets the mercy of God & the peace of Jesus into our hearts & minds. The words of the prophet Joel that were read on Ash Wednesday are God's call to us here & now. Jesus is singing them to us right now:

*🎵 Return to God with all your heart, the source of grace and mercy:
Come seek the tender faithfulness of God. 🎵*

