



March 9, 2025

First Sunday of Lent

Dt 26:4-10 | Rom 10:8-13 | Lk 4:1-13

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

We've all seen it: the standard cartoon sketch in which the main character, faced with a decision, imagines the devil coaxing him toward evil on one shoulder while an angel encourages him toward good on the other. Lighthearted though they are, these classic scenes are the product of Biblical wisdom and millennia of human experience. In fact, the Garden of Eden provided the prototype: Eve was the first to listen to Satan in a conversation that was disastrous for her and her descendants. It is no coincidence that, in today's Gospel, Jesus finds himself in a desert – the “opposite” of a garden, so to speak – where he, too, confronts the devil. But note Jesus' response to Satan's advances: the Incarnate Word of God neither barter nor argues from human wisdom. For no amount of time does he turn over Satan's proposals in his heart. Instead, Jesus rejects the temptations immediately and relies on the power of the Word of God to put the devil in his place.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

The Lenten season is meant to be a “desert” in which we, like Jesus, confront temptation. It is not a self-improvement program; it is an opportunity to reject sins, habits, and attitudes which keep us distant from God so that we can give a wholehearted “yes” to his plan for our lives. But the scene from today's Gospel is offered on the first Sunday of Lent to remind us that we do not go into the desert alone. Jesus entered first to show us that he would be with us every time we are tempted. If, instead of giving Satan airtime, we stay close to Jesus (in prayer and by frequenting the sacraments) and immerse ourselves in the Word of God (by reading Scripture), we, like him, will draw our strength from God. We will emerge victorious because, as St. Paul reminds us, “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart,” and, “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

PLAN

Have you made a Lenten plan yet? If not, the time is now! Don't be afraid to be generous with God. Remember the three pillars of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Could you add a daily Mass or Rosary to your schedule? Could you incorporate some form of self-denial into your weekly meal plan or media consumption? Once you've worked out a plan, offer it to God and ask him to bless your efforts to grow in virtue out of love for him.

Church of the Ascension

ascensionsaratoga.org | 408-725-3939

Masses: (Sat) 5p; (Sun) 7a, 9a, 11a, 5p

(Mon-Fri) 8a; (Sat) 9a

Confessions: (Sat) 4p – 4:45p

Dig a Little Deeper This Lent

If practicing our religion is easy, we're not practicing our religion. This is one valuable lesson we glean from the time Jesus spends in the desert. Challenges to spiritual discipline are many: the desire for creature comforts, the hunger to be admired, the quest for control. Engaging this 40-day exercise each year strengthens the will and purifies the heart. It enables us to prepare for the real temptations that life offers. Is my prayer vital? Have I grown self-indulgent? Is my hand open to others? Our Lenten practice should be a response to those probing questions. - *Takefiveforfaith.com*

ABCs of Fostering Vocations

Let your children notice an attitude of openness to God's will in you.

On the date of your child's baptism, talk about the life of the saint for whom the child is named (or the saint's day it is). There is plenty of information about the background of saints on the Internet. The saints are people from all walks of life who tried to make a positive difference in the world--a goal as real today as it was for the saints. - *USCCB.org*

Funeral

Jean Mary Rigsby, who was a member of Ascension Parish from 1968 to 2004, passed away on February 24. Her funeral was at Ascension Church on March 6. May she rest in peace.

Ascension Facilities Update: Tree Care

The ten redwood trees on the parish grounds have undergone maintenance, including crown cleaning, thinning, and raising, at a total expense of \$5,270. The last major redwood care was five years ago. Two cedars were also serviced for an extra cost of \$900.

ADA Report - Week 5

-Number of Pledges: 71
-Pledged Amount: \$50,055
-Percent of Goal: 65%. Thank you for your support.

Special Collection - March 9

The second collection today is for the Black & Indian Missions. Thank you for your generosity.

WEEKLY OFFERING - MARCH 2

-Total \$6,834 (\$5,826, including a \$2,000 annual contribution + online: \$1,008). Goal: \$6,500.
-YTD: \$225,562. Budget: \$227,500.
-Building/Maintenance Fund: \$1,300.
-Thank you for your generous support.

MASS INTENTIONS

| | | | |
|--------|-----|-------|---------------------|
| Mar 08 | Sat | 05 pm | Paul Lenarduzzi + |
| Mar 09 | Sun | 11 am | Fr. Rey Sarmiento + |
| | | 05 pm | Ron Stopnick + |
| Mar 10 | Mon | 08 am | Felicia Haramoto + |
| Mar 11 | Tue | 08 am | The Gerrard Family |
| Mar 15 | Sat | 09 am | Gloria De Souza (L) |

Holy Father's March Prayer Intention

For families in crisis

Let us pray that broken families might discover the cure for their wounds through forgiveness, rediscovering each other's gifts, even in their differences.

Jerusalem Patriarch's Lenten Message

The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, releases a message at the start of Lent, recalling that the "overbearing rhetoric of conflict and recrimination" can never prevent God from carrying out reconciliation in Jesus. He urged Christians to look to the Cross of Christ, which represents the heart of Easter and the hope of the world, especially in times of war, selfishness, and violence. - *Vaticannews.va*

How To Lent

Sometimes, it feels like Lent is just about giving up chocolate. But deep down, we all desire to do something more for Lent—we just don't know how to do it.

"How to Lent" is a new series from the Augustine Institute that aims to equip Catholics with the tools to understand and practice the pillars of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Guided by Solenne Santiago and with the help of priests and religious, this series will challenge our preconceived notions about Lent, laying out a roadmap for entering the season with a purpose. Don't let Lent sneak up on you like it did last year. Instead, heed the call of St. John the Baptist by preparing for the Lord, using How to Lent to transform your spiritual life this Lenten season.

- *Daily.Formed.org/Lent*



Lenten Practices

-*Abstaining from meat* on Ash Wednesday and Fridays.
-*Fasting* on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday (eat one simple meal a day).
-*Almsgiving* (give to a charity). Faith Formation children participate in Catholic Relief Services' Rice Bowl in response to families experiencing hunger around the world.
-*Stations of the Cross*: Fridays after the 8am Mass.

Pray for Our Candidates for Initiation Sacraments

-Four children preparing for First Holy Communion.
-One teenage candidate for Confirmation.
Order of Christian Initiation
with Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist
-One teenager
-One family of four, including one baptized Lutheran.
Rite of Sending: Sunday, March 9 at 9am Mass.
Rite of Election: Same Sunday, 4pm at Cathedral.
Rite of Scrutiny: March 23; March 30; April 6.