

Discussion Questions
1st Sunday of Lent
February 26, 2023

First Reading / [Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7](#)

1. What in the creation story establishes a bond between humans and all other creatures of earth? What in it establishes a bond between humans and God? Would it be a better world if humans did not have the freedom to choose? Knowing that people would not always resist the temptation to choose evil, why would God ever give the human race free will?
2. After their sin Adam and Eve wanted to cover their bodies. They did not want to be seen as they really were. Is it easy to be honest about faults? If you do become honest about your failings, what is the next step?

Second Reading / [Romans 5:12-19](#)

1. We hear at Easter, “O happy fault! O necessary sin of Adam, which gained for us so great a Redeemer!” St. Paul says in today’s reading that the gift is much greater than the transgression. (Like killing a roach with a nuclear weapon!) Why do you think God would go to this extreme to save us?
2. “... So, through the obedience of the one, the many will be made righteous.” Christ represents all of us before God. Should we be discouraged or saddened by our past sins? How does Christ lift these burdens and bring us peace?

Gospel / [Matthew 4:1-11](#)

1. How does it make you feel to think Jesus had to fight temptation the same way you do? Did he dialogue with the devil or just send him away with the Word of God?
2. Why would Pope Francis say that the desert is “the place of the essential”? He says the following about Sunday’s readings:

Let us imagine that we are in a desert. The first feeling would be that of being enveloped by a great silence: no sound besides the wind and our own breathing. The desert is a place of detachment from the din that surrounds us. It is the absence of words to make room for another Word, the Word of God that caresses our hearts like a light breeze (cf. [1 Kings 19:12](#)).

By calling us to the desert, Jesus invites us to listen to what matters, to what is important, to the essential. ... We need to pray. Because only before God do the inclinations of the heart come to light and the duplicity of the spirit cease. The desert is a place of life not of death because speaking to the Lord in silence, gives us life again.

The desert is the place of the essential. Let us look at our lives: how many useless things surround us! We chase after thousands of things that seem necessary and that in reality are not. How good it would be for us to free ourselves from many superfluous realities, to rediscover what matters.

Audience Pope Francis, Feb. 26, 2020, [Beginning of Lenten Journey](#)