

THE FIRST READING IS FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS

.

The LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.

The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, ‘Did God actually say, “You shall not eat of any tree in the garden”?’

And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,

but God said, “You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden,

neither shall you touch it, lest you die.” ’

But the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die.

For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

*The word of the Lord*

THE RESPONSE TO THE PSALM IS

*Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.*

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your merciful love; according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me completely from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

*Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.*

My transgressions, truly I know them; my sin is always before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned; what is evil in your sight I have done.

*Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.*

Create a pure heart for me, O God; renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from your presence; take not your holy spirit from me.

*Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.*

Restore in me the joy of your salvation; sustain in me a willing spirit.

O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

*Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.*

THE SECOND READING IS FROM THE LETTER OF ST  
PAUL TO THE ROMANS

Brothers and Sisters: Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned — for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.

Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the trespass.

For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for many.

And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgement following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.

For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man; much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

The word of the Lord

*THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION*

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING  
TO MATTHEW

At that time:

Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be  
tempted by the devil.

And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

And the tempter came and said to him,

‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become  
loaves of bread.’

But he answered, ‘It is written,

“Man shall not live by bread alone,

but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” ’

Then the devil took him to the holy city

and set him on the pinnacle of the Temple

and said to him,

‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is  
written,

“He will command his angels concerning you”,

and

“On their hands they will bear you up,

lest you strike your foot against a stone.” ’

Jesus said to him,

‘Again it is written,

“You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.” ’

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

And he said to him,

‘All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.’

Then Jesus said to him,

‘Be gone, Satan! For it is written,

“You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.” ’

Then the devil left him,

and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD

## THE REFLECTION

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil would allow each person to decide for themselves what is right for themselves from their own perspective. This is dangerous as I think every evil act can be justified by the perpetrator. In a society we agree to abide by a moral code together, only a powerful people can say they have their own moral code – I am trying to avoid politics or personal judgments on individuals at this time and focus on the readings.

The Old Testament is history, prophecy- mostly about their own time, religious practice and reflection, sometimes far deeper than they might first appear. This story was one to explain the reality of evil in the world, and a legacy from one generation to another to explain why we can all behave in an evil way because it seems attractive to us.

Pope John Paul II noted the shame they felt; an open and unashamed friendship had become seeing the other as an object of attraction in a different way and probably not all good.

Jesus refuses this temptation when the devil offers him unrestricted power, he could do good, feeding the hungry, showing he was a superman and ruling the world, but his own way which might result in exploitation and a misuse of power. By reading and reflection we can develop our own consciences, as Jesus said last week, he came not to abolish the law from the Old Testament but to fulfil them. The beatitudes focus us to do what is good and right to do. The devil uses clever temptation to influence Eve to do his will, tries to persuade Jesus that he could rule the world and fails. We can reflect the devil's work can influence our lives, tempting us to fulfil our own wishes rather than what is right.

The New catechism develops and expresses this combination of Law and beatitudes in the development of understanding the often-negative phrasing, for example “you must not steal” develops into a careful examination of what right to property we do have and how the goods of the world should be fairly shared for us and future generations.

