

GOSPEL **Matthew 4:1-11**

Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves.' But he replied, 'Scripture says: *We do not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.*'

The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God' he said 'throw yourself down; for scripture says:

*He will put you in his angels' charge,
and they will support you on their hands
in case you hurt your foot against a stone.'*

Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says:

You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'

Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'I will give you all these' he said, 'if you fall at my feet and worship me.' Then Jesus replied, 'Be off, Satan! For scripture says:

*You must worship the Lord your God,
and serve him alone.'*

Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.

COMMENTARY To understand this text, look closely at the first three quotes in italics. These are temptations we all experience: Gather wealth, be reckless in life not bothering about others, go through life without reference to God.

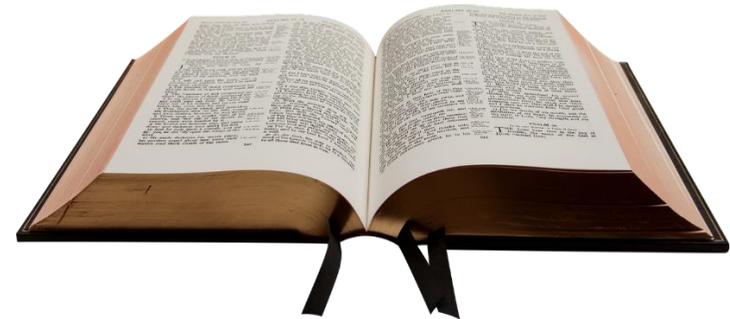
Finally we are told there is only God. We might say: if you bow your head let it be to a lofty mountain. Our temptations arise because we refuse to believe that only God can bring what we are searching for.

LITURGY OF THE WORD,

8TH Sunday in Ordinary Time.

26.2.23.

1ST Sunday of Lent



Dear Parishioners,

I think the overall message in the scriptures is to know yourself. Who are you? Where are you from? Where are you going?

The Maori world value their ancestors. There is a saying:

To forget one's ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without its roots. If that is valuable on the natural plane, how much more is it on the spiritual? By ancestor, we mean those who have worked for peace and justice. So closer to our present age are who should not be forgotten: Mother Aubert, Mother Teresa, the Berrigan brothers, Mordecai Vanunu, Nelson Mandela and St Oscar Romero. These people lived heroic lives. They are our ancestors because they shared our common goal: Peace & Justice or the reign of God.

Ngā mihi.

Fr Alan.

First reading Genesis 2:7-9,3:1-7

The Lord God fashioned man of dust from the soil. Then he breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living being.

The Lord God planted a garden in Eden which is in the east, and there he put the man he had fashioned. The Lord God caused to spring up from the soil every kind of tree, enticing to look at and good to eat, with the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden.

Now the serpent was the most subtle of all the wild beasts that the Lord God had made. It asked the woman, 'Did God really say you were not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?' The woman answered the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden. But of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God said, "You must not eat it, nor touch it, under pain of death."' Then the serpent said to the woman, 'No! You will not die! God knows in fact that on the day you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil.' The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and pleasing to the eye, and that it was desirable for the knowledge that it could give. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She gave some also to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realised that they were naked. So they sewed fig-leaves together to make themselves loin-cloths.

COMMENTARY: This text is an attempt to explain how evil came into the world. What we must notice first of all that there was freedom to obey otherwise the command would not be needed. It is this freedom we need to ponder. I always have choice to have God in my life or not. It would not be a loving relationship without a free response. Faith is a free response to God. Ignore God and the rules that keep us close to him, then chaos gradually takes over.

Second reading Romans 5:12-19

Sin entered the world through one man, and through sin death, and thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has sinned. Sin existed in the world long before the Law was given. There was no law and so no one could be accused of the sin of 'law-breaking', yet death reigned over all from Adam to Moses, even though their sin, unlike that of Adam, was not a matter of breaking a law.

Adam prefigured the One to come, but the gift itself considerably outweighed the fall. If it is certain that through one man's fall so many died, it is even more certain that divine grace, coming through the one man, Jesus Christ, came to so many as an abundant free gift. The results of the gift also outweigh the results of one man's sin: for after one single fall came judgement with a verdict of condemnation, now after many falls comes grace with its verdict of acquittal. If it is certain that death reigned over everyone as the consequence of one man's fall, it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign in life who receives the free gift that he does not deserve, of being made righteous. Again, as one man's fall brought condemnation on everyone, so the good act of one man brings everyone life and makes them justified. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous.

COMMENTARY: The word 'Adam' means 'man' as in the sense of a human being. Here St Paul parallels Adam and Jesus. One brought sin into the world, the other took it away. We can say Adam did not realise the need to listen to God, but for Jesus, this was everything.

