

For The Bulletin of February 18, 2018



THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

From Father Robert

Upon making a commitment, how often do we start out with strong intentions, firm will, and fortitude? Perhaps nothing represents that more in our modern culture than a New Year's resolution. We see and hear ads for gym memberships and diet plans flooding the internet and the airwaves during those first few weeks of January. So many of us are resolute in those weeks. But once a hurdle is in our path we can quickly stumble. Sometimes we can make a commitment to exercise daily, and that routine is manageable for a few days, or even a few weeks. But we also face other priorities in the midst of our goal to exercise daily. Pretty soon, exercising is a long-gone wish.

Jesus faced something much more profound than a New Year's resolution or an intention to exercise daily. Upon being baptized and starting His ministry, He was immediately faced with temptation. He was driven into the desert, a place of no consolation, no respite, and no refreshment. The experience of knowing He is God's Son

gives way to isolation and solitude in a harsh environment.

As a human being, Jesus knew temptation; the gospel is clear about that. But for many Christians it can be difficult to imagine that Jesus was truly tempted, for He was also divine. And yet as He was fully human He was truly tempted. Despite these real temptations, He overcame them. Mark does not tell us much about this period, unlike Luke, for example, with the many scenes of Jesus conversing with Satan. Mark is intent to tell us in sparse text, without wasting a word, that Jesus was tempted by Satan. Jesus was fully human and experienced temptation as we do.

As Jesus was tempted we too will be tempted. Perhaps even our profound experience of faith and trust in God is tested. But after this period of testing Jesus returns to Galilee, His home, and proclaims the Gospel. In this He is a model for us, who will not live without temptation. We might have an experience of desolation that God is not with us in our struggles, trials, and temptations. But like Jesus we can undergo this experience and emerge stronger, with the courage to proclaim the Gospel.



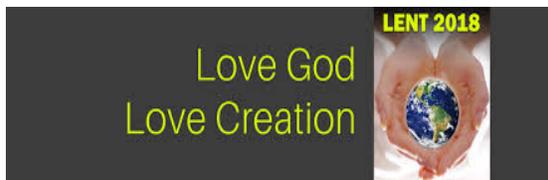
Living The Paschal Mystery

Our lives are filled with many competing priorities. Sometimes we call these "distractions" or temptations. But it is important for us to wisely discern

between distractions/temptations and merely competing priorities. Family responsibilities, for example, are hardly temptations, but they can sometimes pull us in directions we do not enjoy or that are not always life-giving. Perhaps this is why they are called “responsibilities.” Life-giving activities are from the Spirit of God. Pursuits that pull us away from who we are called to be are better called “temptations.” This is where the example of Jesus can be so powerful.

Jesus was, and was called to be, the Son of God. Mark tells us about this experience at Jesus’ baptism. Yet immediately after His baptism, Jesus was in the desert for 40 days, being tempted, only to return to His home, true to His mission, to preach the Gospel.

Often we know who we are called to be. Even in the midst of temptations, or desolation, we know who we are and what we ought to do. Following Jesus does not mean a life on easy street without challenges, difficulty, or pain. Quite the opposite. The Christian life is beset by obstacles, temptations, and pitfalls. As Jesus did, we are called to proclaim the Gospel, whether we do that at home, in our work place, or with friends.



About Liturgy: Lenten Environment

Many of us have gotten it into our Catholic imagination that Lent is about the desert. One reason for this is today’s gospel reading, which, on the First Sunday of Lent, is always about Jesus’ temptation in the desert. But beyond

that reference, nothing else about Lent implies desert or dryness, much less cacti or sand.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy says that Lent has a twofold character: “By the recalling of Baptism or the preparation for it, and Penance, the church prepares the faithful for the celebration of Easter, while they listen more attentively to God’s word and devote more time to prayer.

Accordingly more use is to be made of the baptismal features which are part of the Lenten liturgy”(109). Join this directive with today’s first reading about Noah and the flood and the second reading connecting that flood with the saving waters of baptism, and we get something that looks a lot more like spring with its thunderstorms and new buds bending under the weight of that water.

That image of new life in need of extra care from sudden storms is what this First Sunday of Lent is about as the church makes a covenant with its most vulnerable – the Elect. The promise we give them is that they too will be saved, like Noah, by the flood of God’s grace in the waters of baptism at the upcoming Great Vigil of Easter. We, the church, will be their ark of safety during these last few weeks of temptation, doubt, and second thoughts.

We who are baptized are to be examples for these Elect of ongoing conversion and renewal, of repentance and deeper commitment to living out the vows of our baptism. This is why we make more use of the baptismal features that are proper to the Lenten liturgy in order to help us remember our own baptismal vows for the sake of those who are

preparing to make those vows for the first time. Therefore, we don't empty the baptismal font of its life-giving waters nor do we replace them with sand. The preaching of Lent is about baptism and what it means to live as baptized people who face daily temptations with the courage and faith of Jesus.



About Initiation: The Rite of Election

In every Diocese today, bishops will "elect" those who are ready to be initiated at the next Great Vigil of Easter. Beginning today and continuing throughout Lent, you will hear the names of our Elect proclaimed out loud in the General Intercessions. In addition to the Lenten rites for the elect (the three scrutinies, the presentations of the Lord's Prayer and The Creed, and the preparation rites on Holy Saturday), you will see The Book of the Elect enthroned in the sanctuary next to the tabernacle when it is returned from the Rite of Election in the cathedral this afternoon. Please keep them in prayer as they enter this final period of preparation for initiation.

Building Project Update

As you know, last Spring I wrote to the Diocese seeking approval to expand our parish hall and upgrade the kitchen using the Building Fund. The Diocese identified two tasks to be completed before proceeding: (1) demonstrate that

the project could be completed for the approximately \$1 million on hand and (2) obtain written consent from the donors to the original capital campaign for this project. Once these tasks are completed, our plans would then be referred to the Bishop and his Consulters for final approval. Since conducting a feasibility study would incur significant costs, first priority was given to the Donor Approval Process. Without donor approval, there's no need to continue with this project.

Last Tuesday, I sent a status report to Mr. Paul Bongiovanni, Chief Financial Officer of the Oakland Diocese, informing him that sufficient families have given their approval which now allows us to move forward with the Project. Of the 394 families who made contributions to the Building Fund, 307 families have given their consent for the expansion, 86 families have not yet responded (efforts will continue to reach out to these families), and one family requested that their donation be applied to the parking lot debt.

At this time, I'm also pleased to report that the parish will be contacting the architectural firm of Loving and Campos in Walnut Creek to contract for a formal feasibility study for eventual presentation to the Bishop. I will continue to provide updates as we move closer to achieving our long sought goal: more space for our programs and ministries. I'm truly grateful for your continued support and patience. I also want to express my thanks to the volunteers and pastoral staff members who are working hard to bring this project from a dream to a reality.



The Bishop's Appeal – Commitment Sunday

We have been involved for the past two weeks in this year's Bishop's Appeal occurring throughout our Diocese. As your Pastor, I want to let you know that I support the Appeal and have assured The Bishop that our parish will do everything possible to make it successful. I, too, am making a gift to the Appeal just as I have invited all of you to do as well. The specifics of the Appeal have been outlined in the literature you received. However, I would like to emphasize the spiritual effect the Appeal has on both our parish and the Diocese. The Appeal provides the means to continue the mission that Jesus has entrusted to us: to serve, to educate, to care for the poor, and to be a "beacon of hope." The ministries, services, and programs that are funded from this effort allow us to fulfill the mission given to us all.

Our hope is that each family will be generous and make a one-time gift in the amount of only \$60 or more. The Appeal is based on equal sacrifice, and in our case, equal giving. My concern is that everyone participate and in the past years, we have had one of the highest rates of participation of any parish in the Diocese. Let your gift reflect how generous God has been to you with all His abundance. If you are able to make a pledge, then please do so.

Today at each liturgy, I am inviting you to make your commitment and complete a Gift/Pledge envelope, either the one

that was mailed to you or one of the envelopes in the pews. For those who have already done so, and there are quite a few who have, I thank you for your prompt response and generosity. Thank you for the reflection and prayer you have done to prepare for today's Commitment Sunday. I know that with your response, we will have done our part as a parish community in the Diocese of Oakland and I sincerely and gratefully thank you.



Our Knights of Columbus are once again sponsoring their signature Lenten Friday Fish Fry. Both dining in as well as "drive through" are available. If you dine in, there is Bingo as well as beer and wine offered along with dessert. This is one of the great events of our parish and I hope you will support our Knights. The menu consists of the most delicious deep fried battered Norwegian Cod, crispy French fries, and tangy Cole Slaw. You can't beat the price! And the fellowship is priceless! Bring your family and friends and enjoy a wonderful Lenten Friday evening. The time is 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. each Friday during Lent, except for Good Friday.

thank
you!

...to the members of our Art & Environment Committee and parishioners who helped prepare the environment for Lent: **Rich Confetti, Don Benson, Jose Palomino, Tony and Claudia Gumina, Pablo and Norma Villegas, Denise Moss, Nancy DiMaggio, Theresa Nelms, Harlan Young, Patricia Kramer, Dorothy O'Connor, Lorraine Lohmeier, Tom and Stevie Catchings, Patricia Brittan and Janice Kegler.**

...to our volunteer parishioners who are so faithful in coming early every Saturday morning to clean the church and parish hall in preparation for the weekend: **Angela Bueno, Carole Miller, Rose Salamanca, Emilia Freking, Cathy Romeo, Jack Goncalves, and Steve Rojek.**

...to our volunteer parishioners who clean and maintain the bathrooms each week: **Robert Goncalves, Sofie Zimmerman, Mary Ewing, Virginia Noack, Patricia Britton, and Harlan Young.**

...to **Dilcia Aparacio** who does such an excellent job of washing, ironing, and caring for the Sacred Linens.

...to our Sacristans and Altar Guild who prepare the sanctuary for the celebration of Eucharist each week:

Peter Degl'Innocenti, Pam and Rich Confetti, Vincent Rodriguez, Harlan

Young, Rowena Cayaban, Monika Kauer, Cynthia Enrique, Belen Farin, Nancy Santos and Rose Salamanca.

...to **our counting teams** who are here every week to count the weekly collections.

...to our volunteers who assisted in the parish office last week:

Jeannine Ford, Melodye Costanza, Harlan Young, Yvette Young, Joe Fanfa and Bev Iacona.

...to our St. Vincent de Paul and Mobile Mall volunteers who transported last week's donations: **Bob Carvalho and Barbara Jackson.**

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Bob Carvalho, Carole Miller, Dave Costanza, Vangie Parrilla, Belen Farin, Beth Enea, Kathy Augusta and Vince Augusta.**

...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who keep watch over our vehicles during the weekend liturgies: **Bob Carvalho, Steve Rojek and Bob Goncalves.**



Our Lenten Communal Penance Service will be celebrated on Thursday, March 22nd, at 7:30 p.m. Fr. Vincent Scott, Retired Pastor Emeritus of Church of the Assumption, San Leandro, will be with me to share in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which will be celebrated in the context of Sung Evening Prayer. Individual celebration of the sacrament takes place each Saturday from 2:45 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Chapel of Reconciliation.



HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE

PALM SUNDAY

Saturday, March 24: Vigil Liturgy,
4:00 p.m. *Blessing of Palms,
Procession, Proclamation of the
Passion, Holy Eucharist*

Sunday, March 25: 8:00 a.m. and
10:30 a.m. *Blessing of Palms,
Procession, Proclamation of the
Passion, Holy Eucharist*

Monday of Holy Week

March 26
8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Tuesday of Holy Week

March 27
8:00 a.m. Liturgy of the Word and Holy
Communion

Wednesday of Holy Week

March 28
8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Holy Thursday

March 29
8:00 a.m. Sung Morning Prayer
7:30 p.m. Evening Mass of the Lord's
Supper - *Presentation of the Holy Oils,
Liturgy of the Word, Washing of Feet,
Holy Eucharist, Procession to the Altar
of Repose, Adoration until 10:00 p.m.*

Good Friday

March 30
8:00 a.m. Sung Morning Prayer
3:00 p.m. Solemn Commemoration of
the Lord's Passion and Death - *Liturgy*

*of the Word, Veneration of the Cross,
Holy Communion*
7:00 p.m. *Tenebrae - Scriptures of the
Passion and Veneration of the Cross*

Holy Saturday

March 31
8:00 a.m. Sung Morning Prayer
7:30 p.m. *The Great Vigil of Easter -
Lighting of the New Fire, Liturgy of the
Word, Liturgy of Initiation, Renewal of
Baptismal Promises, Liturgy of the
Eucharist, followed by a welcome
reception in the parish hall for those
initiated.*

Easter Day

April 1
8:00 a.m. and **10:30 a.m.**
Festive Celebrations of Holy Eucharist
*Procession, Liturgy of the Word,
Renewal of Baptismal Promises, Holy
Eucharist*

