

Fr. Martin's Reflection – February 26, 2023

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Welcome to our first week of Lent. Our first reading, Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7, talks about how God created us and breathed life into us. It also tells us how God created a space of beauty for us providing for all our wants and needs. The perfect world.

In this same reading we find 'the serpent,' a very cunning creature with the great ability to deceive and distort the truth. Both Adam and Eve fall victim to the serpent's cunning and deception and they choose to go against God's instructions not to eat of the tree of life and in so doing removed themselves from the care and protection of God and rendering themselves naked and ashamed.

It's sad, yet true, how many of us fall for the empty words of flattery from people who are simply trying to get their own way. Getting us to do things that we know in our hearts is wrong by telling us it's 'our life, our choice and no one's business.' When they get what they want we are left naked, isolated, and afraid. We feel so ashamed of ourselves and afraid that God will be angry with us and want to punish us, so we, like Adam and Eve, hide from God and live our lives in despair and sadness.

Lent is an invitation from God; described very beautifully in our first reading on Ash Wednesday from the Prophet Joel: "Now, now – it is the Lord who speaks – come back to me with all your heart, fasting, weeping, mourning. Let your hearts be broken, not your garments torn, turn to the Lord your God again, **for God is all tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in graciousness, and ready to relent.**" Joel 2:12-13

Let's come home this Lent – come and experience God's tenderness, compassion. God's wonderful graciousness and ever willingness to forgive.

Fr. Martin