

*Lent 1A 2014*  
*Fall and Redemption*

The readings we have just heard are almost too rich to absorb. They speak of temptation, sin, and redemption. They are the story of our salvation. They are the perfect beginning for this Lenten season.

In the first reading, the serpent tempts the woman to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He tempts the woman by saying if she and her husband eat this fruit they will be like gods. Desiring to take the place of their creator, the man and woman disobey the one commandment God has given for their welfare. No longer obedient to the One who created them, they fall from the freedom of God's grace into the slavery of sin and death.

In the gospel, we heard the familiar story of Jesus being tested in the wilderness. *If* you are the Son of God, the tempter says, turn stone into bread. *If* you are the Son of God, save yourself. Worship me, the Deceiver promises, and I will give you all the kingdoms of the world. But unlike the man and woman, Jesus refuses to disobey God. Unlike the man and the woman, Jesus overcomes Satan's temptation by trusting in the power of God to save him.

Saint Paul explains the meaning of these stories in this way. The first man brought sin and death into the world by his disobedience, Christ brought life and grace into the world by his trusting obedience.

As we stand at the beginning of another Lent, we stand between these two human beings: the old Adam who brought Sin and Death into the world by his disobedience and the New Adam who brought life and grace into the world by his obedience. We stand between two ways of living, a life in which we selfishly choose to make ourselves the center of the world and a life in which we generously choose to give ourselves in service to others. We are faced with a choice between sin and grace, death and life, a choice of being in the Old Adam or the New Adam.

This is why Lent is so important. It is our time to reaffirm what happened to us at baptism when we were incorporated in the New Adam. At that moment we became part of God's new creation; we became part of the New Adam. And so Lent is our time to become what God created us to be by conforming ourselves to Christ's saving death and life-giving resurrection.

Who do we want to be at the end of Lent? Where do we want to be at the end of this Lent? For my part, I want to grow into the grace of Christ. I want to live in trusting obedience to the One who created me. I want to choose life.