

A Reflection from Fr. Joseph

On this first Sunday of Lent, we find Jesus in the desert with the devil. The devil, of course, is attempting to tempt Jesus to sin. On the first reading of this gospel, it appears that Jesus and the devil are not alone. The story tells us that Jesus was with wild beasts and the angels ministered to him. But that is only one way of reading this text. It is also possible to see the presence of the wild beasts and the angels not as additional characters but as descriptions of the ways in which Satan comes to test Jesus. If we adopt this perspective, it is easy to understand how Satan would come to Jesus as a wild beast. The scriptures themselves describe Satan as a roaring lion, prowling about, seeking someone to devour. But can we imagine Satan approaching as an angel?

We can. In fact, it is a clever technique of the devil to approach under the guise of something good. On the sidewall of the Sistine Chapel, in Rome, there is a fresco of today's gospel, painted by the Italian painter, Botticelli. But when you first approach the picture, you have no idea that its topic is the temptation of Christ. The painting presents Jesus in conversation with a holy man, with a man dressed as a monk and holding a rosary in his hand. It is only when you look at the painting more closely, that you see that under the hem of the monk's habit are two clawed feet. Then you notice that on his back (out of the sight of Jesus) there are two small black wings. Botticelli understood that the devil does not usually come to us as a wild beast but often approaches dressed in something that is holy and good.

This is an important lesson for us during the season of Lent. During this time, we try to turn away from evil. We should understand that evil seldom comes to us in its true form. Peace is a genuine good. To live in harmony with the people around us, to get along with the people that we know, and love is a blessing. But when the desire to keep the peace leads us to be dishonest with our spouse, when the desire to go along with the group prevents us from telling our friends that they are wrong to abuse drugs or alcohol, peace becomes merely a garb to cover something harmful. The devil is pleased to use peace, so that we might enable others to fall. That is why we should not be taken in by his deception.

Service is at the heart of the gospel. To give of ourselves, to sacrifice our desires for the sake of another, is following the very example of Christ. But when others use our generosity to manipulate us, when our giving is used to abuse or hurt us, it is no longer good. The devil rejoices to use our desire to give, as a way to enslave us. That is why we must draw boundaries to protect ourselves. That is why we should not accept the sham that the devil presents to us.

Love is Jesus' greatest commandment. The love of our family and friends is a profound good. But the love of the people close to us, can be used to diminish those who are different from us. The devil delights in using the love of our family and friends or the love of our country to lessen and denigrate others. That is why we should not fall for his tricks.

If the devil were to come to you as a wild beast, you would run away. But when an angel approaches, you pay attention. Today's gospel warns you to examine the words of any angel and to look carefully under the hem of his garment. If you see clawed feet there, do not listen. Flee at once.

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Mon. Feb. 19th - Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18; Mat. 25:31-46

Tue. Feb. 20th - Is. 55:10-11; Mat. 6:7-15

Wed. Feb. 21st - Jonah 3:1-10; Luke 11:29-32

Thurs. Feb. 22nd - CHAIR OF ST. PETER, feast
1 Peter 5:1-4; Mat. 16:13-19



Fri. Feb. 23rd - Ezekiel 18:21-28; Mat. 5:20-26

Sat. Feb. 24th - Deut. 26:16-19; Mat. 5:43-48

Sun. Feb. 25th - SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Genesis 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18; Rom. 8:31b-35, 37; Mark 9:2-10

PARISH ENVELOPES FOR 2024

Have you picked up your new sets of parish envelopes? They are arranged alphabetically on the table at the entrance of the church. If you have recently requested a set, you will also find them there. If you would like a set please call the parish office.

A 2nd collection will be taken up this weekend, at all the Masses, for St. Joseph's Society.

This Sunday's second collection supports our retired priests who have dedicated their entire life to the Church. Thank you for your generosity and support.

ALTAR SERVERS

Wed. Feb. 21st - 7 :30 PM - Volunteers

Sat. Feb. 24th - 5:00 PM - C & C Tang,
J.Tuguinay, N. Marquez-Ambrosio, S.Ojerinde.

Sun. Feb. 25th - 9AM - A & V Collins, A & A Chan, I.Petti. **11AM** - Elisa, Klyde & Kyle Tan, S.Szomora, A & A Babas, W.Pham. **5PM** - J.Paja, D.Dang, J.Plata, L.Villawarayan, M.Cabuhayan, J.Cayabyab, Z.Bambilla.

**EXTRA LENTEN SERVICES**

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS ON FRIDAYS AT 7 PM
FOLLOWED BY MASS. PLEASE JOIN US.**

Anointing of the Sick

This Wednesday, February 21st, Fr. Jun will administer the Sacrament of the Sick at our Novena Mass at 7:30 pm. All are welcome to attend!



SCHOOL NEWS

- **No School:** this Monday, Feb. 19th for Family Day.
- **School Mass:** Please join us this Wednesday at 9 am.
- **Noon Dismissal:** Friday, Feb. 23rd
- **St. Jude School Accepting new Applications**

We are now accepting new applications for the 2024-25 school year. If interested, please call the school office at 604-434-1633 for application form.

FAMILY DAY - This Monday, Feb. 19th

Please note: Our office will be closed for the holiday.

ARCHDIOCESAN NEWS

Up-Coming Events

Stewardship Reflection

"After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God...." - Mark 1:14

Have you ever thought about how difficult it must have been for Jesus to go to Galilee, knowing that John had just been arrested for teaching the same message that He was proclaiming. It took great love and trust for Jesus to do what the Father had sent Him here on earth to do. In the same way, living a stewardship lifestyle takes great love and trust from us. We must be willing to surrender completely to God, trusting that He will always give us all that we need to fulfill His plan for us.

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Pastoral Letter on the Use of Social Media

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCC) has released its Pastoral Letter on the use of social media titled: *"Let Your Speech Always Be Gracious."* The Pastoral Letter can be accessed and shared via rcav.org/announcements

Assembly of Western Canada Bishops Mass

The Western Bishops of Canada will be celebrating Mass on Tuesday, February 20, at Saint Paul's Parish in Richmond. Mass will begin at 5:00 p.m. All are welcome to attend

The Most Holy Eucharist: Gift and Sacrament

Join this Lenten Parish Mission with Father Wade Menezes, CPM. Mission topics include:

The Eucharist as Foreshadowed Both in the Old and New Testaments

1. The Church Fathers on Eucharistic Doctrine
2. Rekindling Eucharistic Amazement: The Saints and the Eucharist
3. The 'Most Blessed' of the Seven Sacraments

On Monday, Feb. 19 to Thursday, Feb. 22, from 7 to 8 p.m. at Sts. Peter & Paul in Vancouver. There will also be time for Confession before the mission talks. Learn more via beholdvancouver.org/events

Grief: A Complicated Journey

Grief can be unpredictable. It comes and goes, sometimes in waves. It affects our sense of well-being and changes us forever. In this talk, popular speaker and registered psychologist Denis Boyd will discuss healthy and unhealthy grief, the reactions to grief, and the factors that influence grief. He will also provide some coping strategies and tools to help handle important anniversaries and post-holiday times. Sat., Feb. 24, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Lourdes in Coquitlam. Learn more and register at beholdvancouver.org/events

Fiat Women's Retreat

Discover where God is calling you to be present and available at our Fiat Women's Retreat.

Mary always made herself present and available while nurturing Jesus and accompanying the disciples before her Assumption into heaven. She is "the new beginning" of the vocation of women, exemplifying the richness of femininity. Join us in discovering where you are called to be present and available in your journey of femininity.

Open to all single women aged 18-35. The retreat is on March 8-10 at Carmel Hill in Deroche. Cost is \$200, with financial assistance available. **Registration deadline: Fri., March 1.** Learn more and register via beholdvancouver.org/events

Father in Heaven, protect us in our struggle against evil. As we begin the discipline of Lent, make this season holy by our self-denial. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God, forever and ever.