

## Lent Devotional March 1, 2020

### Scripture

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-13, 20-24 (Sunday Readings)

*15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." . . . 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" 4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; 5 for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. 8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." 11 He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" 12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." . . . 20 The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living. 21 And the LORD God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them. 22 Then the LORD God said, "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"—23 therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.*

### Devotional

#### The Rev. Dr. Donald P. Owens '69, Academia (2002)

This great story of the primordial parents of the whole human race continues to invoke the nature of humanity and the grace of the loving God and Creator. This story is one of freedom and love. We have been created free to make our choices—but *not* free to choose our consequences! Lent is the time to examine our choices and their consequences.

Human beings continually make poor choices and pursue inadequate remedies for their mistakes. Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit and realized they were naked. To remedy their vulnerability, they made clothes of fig leaves. But humans are allergic to fig leaves, not to mention the leaves are not large enough to cover what needs to be covered and wilt shortly after being taken from the tree. Adam and Eve were afraid. They suffered deep and profound fear.

But God, being more concerned with their (and our) future than with their past, steps into the picture and remarks, You ate from the forbidden tree! His grace prevails, and he makes for them clothes out of skins—adequate and lasting. With Eve following him, Adam is removed from the Garden, and thus they are protected. For if they had eaten from the Tree of Life (the other tree growing in the center of the

Garden), they would have lived forever in their state of fear. God's gracious act of removal prevents their living eternally in pain and shame.

In this time of Lent, let us examine our lives. We know that we often make many poor choices and just as poorly try to correct or cover them up. At the same time, we often reap the consequences. Instead of dwelling on our poor choices, let us recognize God's embracing grace. What may seem like a curse is often, instead, divine grace that keeps us from an even worse fate. For God is infinitely more concerned with our future than our past. Lent is the time to embrace God's grace and love in our lives—and in the lives of all around us.

**Prayer**

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan, come quickly to help us, for we are assaulted by many temptations. You know all our weaknesses—let each one of us find you mighty to save. We make these requests through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.