

NOTRE DAME PARISH

First Sunday of Lent

The Spirit drove Jesus into the desert to be tempted by Satan



Christ in the desert revealed the new Adam, the One who would vanquish the Tempter. Unlike Adam (and, later, the Israelites in the desert), Jesus did not fall to whims of selfish ambition. No, Jesus remained the faithful Son. And in his fidelity, he claimed victory over Satan. He also foreshadowed his obedient acceptance of the cross.

His fidelity was not only

pointed toward his Father. When he answered "NO!" to Satan, he answered "YES!" for us. He would be a faithful servant to us. We who turn away from God find ourselves pursued and served by God in the person of Jesus. When we become his followers, his "NO!" becomes our rejection of evil. His "YES!" becomes our battle cry of hope for the Father.

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, February 20 @ 4PM

Joe & Mary Lou Meell
Raymond & Pauline McDonald

Sunday, February 21 @ 9:30AM

Al Shinn

Monday, February 22 @ 8AM

Frank Parkerson

Tuesday, February 23 @ 8AM

Michael Skrbina

Wednesday, February 24 @ 8:30AM

Roman Macudzinski

Thursday, February 25 @ 8:30AM

Ruth Smith

Friday, February 26 @ 8AM

Beverly Battle

Saturday, February 27 @ 4PM

Tim & Alyce Sullivan
Pauline & Raymond McDonald

Oremus – Let Us Pray

- For the people of Texas and other regions needing electricity, heat, and food
- For the fair and effective distribution of COVID-19 vaccines
- For the grace to resist temptation
- For a sincere and fruitful Lenten season
- For victims of human trafficking
- For the sick of our parish, especially those with chronic or terminal conditions
- For caregivers and all who sacrifice themselves for the sake of others
- For students adversely effected by distance learning over the past year
- For the earth and its resources

Lent and Poetry

Lent, like going on a retreat, can hit one like a brick wall. To be fruitful, Lent must halt – or at least slow down – our regular rhythms, habits, and concerns. One has to make adjustments, think interiorly, remember days of fast and abstinence, and set new priorities for forty days.

Many of us, with zeal, try to do too much during the Lenten season, as if we can change our whole lives at once. The point of Lent is *not to take control* but to *surrender control* to God.

When going on retreat, I have often made the mistake of trying to fill my time reading all the spiritual books I can find. Without TV or ordinary entertainments, I substitute spiritual “busyness” for ordinary “busyness.” This is not good.

One way I have found to make transitions from daily life to spiritual times and places is to read religious poetry.

Ordinarily, I seldom if ever read poetry. I am too impatient. I like information. In high school I took a speed-reading seminar. Most of us, I dare say, read for information and rarely for meditation or contemplation.

Poetry is an excellent tool for teaching us to slow down, to apprehend meanings, to savor the lilt and lyric and sounds of words.

A cow’s stomach has four compartments. It takes all four for digestion and nutrition.

Lenten reading should be, like a cow’s stomach, a rumination. Poetry is a way to begin such a process of slowing down.

Father Keith & Rocco



“Lent is not just a time for squaring conscious accounts, but for realizing what we had perhaps not seen before.”

Thomas Merton

George Herbert, the Divine



“Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night.”

George Herbert (1593-1633) was a priest of the Church of England. He is classed among several other divines of the period who composed religious poetry. The simplicity and directness of his metaphors, paradoxes, and images influenced twentieth-century poets.

His poems are a departure from earlier English poetry in which meter and rhythm determined the structure. Herbert’s poems are lyrical, imitating spoken English. Indeed, several of his poems became the lyrics of hymns which we still sing.

The following poem, “Lent” acknowledges human weakness in the Lenten observances.

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STATION II

JESUS ACCEPT HIS CROSS



The parents of a girl who was brutally murdered recount how theirs "was a life of sacrifices based on work and family". They used to ask themselves: "Why has this evil overwhelmed us?" They could find no peace.

"At the moment when despair seems to take over, the Lord comes to meet us in different ways", they say. "He gives us the grace to love each other like newlyweds, supporting each other, even with difficulty". Today, they continue to open their doors to all those in need.

The commandment to perform acts of charity to us is a kind of salvation: we do not want to surrender to evil. God's love is truly capable of renewing life because, before us, his Son Jesus underwent human suffering so as to experience true compassion.

STATION III

JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME



"It was the first time I fell. But for me that fall was death." This third meditation is written by a prisoner. He did not know about the evil growing inside him, he says.

After a difficult life, one evening "like an avalanche.... anger killed my kindness... I took someone's life." After considering committing suicide in prison, he found people who gave him back the faith he had lost, he says.

My first fall was failing to realize that goodness exists in this world. My second, the murder, was really its consequence, for I was already dead inside.

These reflections come from the Vatican website.

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LENT

*Welcome dear feast of Lent: who loves not thee,
He loves not Temperance, or Authority,
But is compos'd of passion.
The Scriptures bid us fast; the Church says, now:
Give to thy Mother, what thou wouldst allow
To ev'ry Corporation.*

*The humble soul compos'd of love and fear
Begins at home, and lays the burden there,
When doctrines disagree,
He says, in things which use hath justly got,
I am a scandal to the Church, and not
The Church is so to me.*

*True Christians should be glad of an occasion
To use their temperance, seeking no evasion,
When good is seasonable;
Unless Authority, which should increase
The obligation in us, make it less,
And Power itself disable.*

*Besides the cleanness of sweet abstinence,
Quick thoughts and motions at a small expense,
A face not fearing light:
Whereas in fulness there are sluttish fumes,
Sour exhalations, and dishonest rheums,
Revenging the delight.*

*Then those same pendant profits, which the spring
And Easter intimate, enlarge the thing,
And goodness of the deed.
Neither ought other men's abuse of Lent
Spoil the good use; lest by that argument
We forfeit all our Creed.*

*It's true, we cannot reach Christ's forti'eth day;
Yet to go part of that religious way,
Is better than to rest:
We cannot reach our Saviour's purity;
Yet we are bid, 'Be holy ev'n as he, '
In both let's do our best.*

*Who goeth in the way which Christ hath gone,
Is much more sure to meet with him, than one
That travelleth by-ways:
Perhaps my God, though he be far before,
May turn and take me by the hand, and more:
May strengthen my decays.*

*Yet Lord instruct us to improve our fast
By starving sin and taking such repast,
As may our faults control:
That ev'ry man may revel at his door,
Not in his parlour; banqueting the poor,
And among those his soul.*

George Herbert plays with paradox, labeling the season of Lent, normally a time of fasting, as a feast. In the last stanza he speaks of starving sin, which puts me in mind of the words of the late Terry Finlay, Archbishop of Toronto (1937-2017):

*Fast from excess and feast on simplicity,
Fast from negatives and feast on alternatives,
Fast from discontent and feast on gratitude,
Fast from gossip and feast on silence,
Fast from self-concern and feast on
compassion,
Fast from anxiety and feast on faith.*