**“Sin and Salvation”**

All our readings today point us to the effect of sin and the gift of our salvation. On one hand, it is by sinning that we oppose God’s ways. Sin leads us to separation from God. It puts a thick veil between us and God. The veil does not affect God in any way, but it affects us in receiving His abundant grace that He wants to shower on us. On the other hand, Salvation, brings us back to God. It is our restoration to God’s ways and His supernatural grace so we can become children of God.

Our first reading first points to our lowliness. It points out to us that we were formed from the earth. However, God blew His breath of life into our form. It is by His breath that we become human and have eternal life which we had before temptation and the fall from grace took it away. Our fall from this grace, included separation from the unimaginable beauty of paradise. It included separation from the good things of comfort God had prepared and given us in the garden.

Our fall was due to the tempter, the father of lies, the devil who came into the picture in the form of a serpent. He used his cunning ways to appeal to our freewill. He appealed to our desire to be free from God. So, in disobedience, we chose what was opposed to God’s design for us. We chose what was opposed to God’s will. Our fall into sin led into death and all the suffering that comes with death. On getting our wish, our eyes were opened and we realized that without God, we were naked both physically and spiritually.

As we are in this season of lent, the Church would like to remind us of the road we came from. She wants to remind us of how God in His mercy, goodness, and kindness would bring greater good out of our fall from grace. The reminder is that we must not forget God’s love for us and that He desires our friendship so He can pour out His blessings on us.

St Paul in his letter to the Romans, reminded us of our fall from grace by contrasting the disobedience of the first Adam in the garden with, the obedience of the second Adam Christ who is the source of our salvation. The first Adam disobeyed and all of us are negatively impacted. While the second Adam obeyed and we are all restored to friend ship with God.

However, it is up to us to use our freewill to choose the gift of salvation we have been given through Christ. We will be saved by choosing the will of God. God desires for us to use our free will to come to Him by choosing life over death. He wants us to choose between the temporary pleasure of this world which leads to death, and the treasures of heaven which leads to life. He wants us to turn away from sin and turn towards Him.

In our Gospel reading, Just as the first Adam was tested by the devil so we heard today that Jesus the second Adam was tested three times by the devil. However, unlike the first Adam, the second Adam overcame the cunning of the devil. Jesus used scripture quotes to defeat him all three times He was tempted.

All three test were at the time Jesus was most vulnerable. He was hungry and tired after fasting for forty days. Hunger is something we all try to avoid at all cost. One can remember the story of Esau and Jacob in which Esau sold his birth right for some bread and a bowl of lentil stew. However, the devil did not know that the word of God is Jesus’ food.

The second test the devil played on Jesus was about physical pain. The devil said by jumping, God would send His angels to hold up Jesus from getting hurt. Again suffering is something we all try to avoid at all cost. That is why pharmaceutical companies are always excited to come up with more new drugs so we would not suffer pain.

The third test by the devil was about power to control the world. The devil the father of lies made a promise to give what he did not have. All power belongs to God and not to the devil. However, in the end, Jesus sent him away humiliated and defeated. Jesus in defeating the devil by using Scripture gave us the answer as to how we are to defeat the devil when he comes to test us.

We have been set free from sin and death through the paschal mystery of Christ. The paschal mystery means that Jesus passed through suffering into joy, through humiliation into glory and through death into life. We also, go through our own paschal mystery at baptism. We go through a form of death with Christ when all our sins were washed away in the blood of Christ. We then rose with Christ to share in His life of grace.

As we come with utmost reverence to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us ask for more of His grace so we can defeat the devil whenever he comes to tempt us.