

February 17-18, 2018

First Sunday of Lent

Genesis 9:8-15

First Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:12-15

But for the lovely resorts with abundant pools, spa treatments and lush golf courses which dot our local desert landscapes, the desert is a harsh environment. Wise travelers are still encouraged to bring water with them on their sojourns to Vegas and even wiser drivers make sure their cars are in good maintenance lest they end up roadside with a blown tire or overheated engine. Within Scripture, the imagery of the DESERT is portrayed as a place of PURIFICATION and PREPARATION, an environment in which extraneous pursuits are purged, lest our attention be diverted from what is most important. While varying slightly depending on which Evangelist is being read, the First Weekend of Lent is ALWAYS about Jesus being led into the DESERT...and being TEMPTED by Satan. While slightly confusing with the overlay of Valentine's Day, this past Wednesday was our FIRST DAY in the DESERT of Lent...and we will remain within it up until Holy Thursday. Akin to a visit to the doctor for our yearly physical, a financial review with our banker or investment counselor or a performance evaluation with our employer, Lent is the invitation (urging) from God for us to take an accounting of our lives. Are we embracing Jesus of the Scriptures or a Jesus of our own fabrication? In these twisted days of discursive tumult, have we started to apply our own filters to the words of the Gospel, limiting Jesus' admonition to be kind, humane and welcoming to EVERYONE....not just those we like or with whom we agree? Have we given ourselves broad permissions to live our lives as we wish, setting aside the 'Do unto others as you would have them do to you...' words of Jesus? Have we forgotten 'The measure with which you measure will be measured back to you....' (meaning, we get back from God the same generosity of love, kindness, mercy and compassion as we show to others....and that means everyone, not just those we like)? Honesty with ourselves is sometimes harder than honesty with others because many of us are comfortable living within a world of our own illusions, our own truths and sometimes even our own Gods. Thus, the season of Lent is a lengthy journey to strip away the illusions, to come face to face with how GOD sees us, not how we like to see ourselves. Welcome to Lent....and remember, the kingdom of God is at hand....repent and believe in the Gospel.

Thank you for sharing these early days of Lent with our Santa Clara Community. A reminder to those who have not yet completed your PSA pledge...please do not delay but join with the hundreds of others who have already committed to turning our dreams into reality. **Reservations for our Good Friday Prayer Breakfast, featuring Dr. Henry Oster, a Holocaust survivor, are available after all the Masses this weekend.** Invitations were mailed this week but knowing how fast the Prayer Breakfast sells out...you may not wish to wait!. Please take a Bulletin with you for news of other Lenten events coming up and while you are repenting and believing in the Gospel, please remember as well that you are loved. FKB