



FEBRUARY 26, 2023 | FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

HOLY FAMILY PARISH

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Tazewell, VA 24651

ST. ELIZABETH'S
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Pocahontas, VA 24635

ST. MARY'S
1122 Farmer Street
Richlands, VA 24641

ST. JOSEPH'S
1007 Independence Rd.
Grundy, VA 24614

When the tempter comes?

ONCE upon a time, little Jimmy went to the refrigerator and cut a slice of cake against the instructions of his mom. When his mom asked him why he disobeyed, he replied and said, “Mom, it wasn’t me. I can tell you what happened. I minded my business and my eyes kept going to the refrigerator. Then my leg moved there, my hand opened the refrigerator and cut the cake and gave it to my mouth.”

Have you ever been tempted to do or say something bad? That is the first question. The second question is have you ever done something bad following a temptation? An honest introspection would show that we are liable to temptations and we could also fall into certain sins depending on the decision we make when we face temptations.

The First Sunday of Lent tells us about the reality of temptation with the narratives of the Fall of Adam and Eve and the three-fold

temptations of our Lord Jesus Christ in the desert. These are not mere stories but profound transforming lessons in our daily confrontation with temptations.

The First Reading (Gn 2:7-9; 3:1-7) tells us about the entrance of the tempter (the devil) in the lovely and compelling story of Adam and Eve. The narrative shows us that the devil had already defected from being an angel in heaven and had become an opposition to God (Isaiah 14:12-15).

The First Reading tells us that the devil (taking the form of the serpent) was the most cunning of all the animals that God made. The serpent comes to the woman to ask a very tricky question, “Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?” Notice here that the devil comes with a puzzling question that puts one in doubt about the right course to follow. Remember the times you have a lot of questions going through your mind.

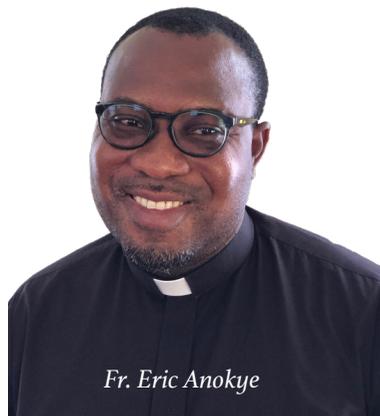
Eve answers and says that God’s instruction says that they could eat of any of the fruits but not the one in the middle of the garden which would bring about their death if they should eat of it. The answer the serpent gives would be a great lesson for us. It begins by contradicting God’s instruction, “You certainly will not die! No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is evil.” Here the devil was

implying the God lied to them.

Notice here that the devil comes with a lie, and believing the devil’s lie makes one his victim. From this interaction, we notice that temptation happens when the devil presents a false proposal with a promise. In the Gospel of John (8:44), our Lord Jesus Christ tells us that the devil is the father lies and a murderer from the beginning who cannot stand with the truth. Summarily, Adam and Eve sinned because they accepted the lies and false promises of the devil. The Gospel tells us about the temptation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Notice here that the devil comes to our Lord Jesus Christ after forty days of fasting and prayers. One would think that such a long period of holy encounter would keep the devil away. But the devil comes at the height of your spiritual progress to destroy your entire spiritual exercise.

The account of the experiences of our Lord Jesus shows that the devil will always negotiate with one’s ego, needs, presumption, and false promises during temptation. Pay attention to the three allurements:

- If you are the Son of God (appeal to his ego) command that these stones become loaves of bread (appeal to his needs).
- If you are the Son of God (appeal to his ego) throw yourself down for it is written He will command his angels concerning you, and with



Fr. Eric Anokye

their hands, they will support you lest you dash your foot against a stone (appeal to presumption).

- All these I shall give you if you will prostrate yourself and worship me (false promises).

Notice that the devil knows the power of the word of God and makes extensive use of the scriptures to tempt our Lord. One fact we should know is that the devil does not force us to sin but uses lies to engage our minds to give in to sin. The way we respond determines what we get.

Our Lord Jesus Christ responds to the devil by making vital references to the Word of God that disproves the various postulations of the devil. Observe also that the devil does not argue but at each time comes with a new temptation. The devil will always devise a new tactic. St. Paul tells us not to be ignorant of the devices of the devil (2 Cor. 2:11).

We have a depth of lessons to learn from the Fall of our first parents and the Triumph of our Lord Jesus Christ. The devil comes with contradictions to what God says, with lies and false promises. To withstand the temptations of the devil, we need to stand firm on what God says we should do. Furthermore, we need to stand on the truth. In the Gospel of John (8:32) our Lord Jesus Christ tells us that when we come to know the truth, it will set

us free.

As we march into the Lenten season, we need to pay attention to the temptations that come our way in various forms and shapes. Temptations will leverage our ego, our needs, presumptions and the false promises of the devil. Let us also pay attention to the movements of our minds. We are as weak or strong as our thoughts. We could see LENT as an acronym which would mean: Leave Every Negative Thought!

Have a blessed season of Lent, and may God give you the grace to overcome all the temptations that may come your way. God bless you.

PASTOR

Fr. Eric Anokye
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(276) 385-7312

OFFICE MANAGER/ BOOKKEEPER

Lydia St. Peter

OFFICE HOURS

Mon–Fri 9:30AM – 2:30PM

Please call the parish office to make arrangements for the **Sacraments of Baptism, Anointing of the Sick or Holy Matrimony** as well as funerals. **Reconciliation** is available from 30 minutes before a scheduled Mass.

MASS TIMES

SATURDAY

4PM – St. Joseph's
6PM – St. Mary's

SUNDAY

9AM – St. Elizabeth's
11:30AM – St. Theresa's

TUESDAY & FRIDAY

10AM – St. Theresa's

Cover image:

Ivan Kramskoi, *Christ in the Desert*, 1872

We are called to charity – even toward the annoying people who talk during Mass

By David Mills, *oursundayvisitor.com*



“Seriously,” he says, “do you understand a word he’s saying?” The man two rows behind us at Mass, sitting with his wife in the last row, has been talking the whole time. Sometimes about the Mass and sometimes about almost any subject under the sun.

I know few people are as easily distracted as I am, but still, **WHY IS HE TALKING THROUGH MASS?** I resist the temptation to turn around and ask him, “Why are you here, if you’re not interested in what’s going on?”

The priest lived in China till he was 12 and speaks with a Chinese accent, but he speaks understandably. Sometimes he blends two words, when he can’t say the first letter of the second word sharply enough for American ears. But you can only say he can’t be understood if you assume he can’t be understood, because you assume anyone with a Chinese accent can’t be understood. **BECAUSE YOU’RE NOT ACTUALLY LISTENING.**

At the end of Father’s homily, the man says, “Well, whaddaya know?” in a happy voice. He’s enjoyed the homily. I’m pleased. Then he says, “Nine minutes!”

Father pauses for a few seconds before starting the Creed, and he says, “Get movin’.” He continues talking through the Eucharistic prayer and then through Communion, up to and after going forward. Not quite in a normal speaking voice, but in three-quarters of a normal speaking voice.

He seems not to understand what worship requires. You can’t talk and concentrate on what’s going on at the same time. I finally decided to say something

to him after Mass, as nicely as possible, about how distracting some people find conversation behind them. But he and his wife left after Communion.

Thinking about this the next day, I saw he’d annoyed me more than I’d realized. Many people don’t realize how hard it is for some of us to stay concentrated on the subject, and I’d had an hour of continuous distractions. It’s mentally exhausting.

And this isn’t unusual behavior, even at Mass. I’ve had to shush friends and acquaintances talking when they shouldn’t, and my wife has sometimes felt she had to shush me.

Sometimes they (my wife would suggest I write “we”) didn’t know their voice carried or didn’t think their talking would bother anyone, sometimes they didn’t care because people talking didn’t bother them, or they felt they had to say what they had to say, or they were excited about whatever they were saying, or they were bored and didn’t handle boredom well, or they didn’t understand the gravity of the event, or they were just generally clueless about the world around them.

When I told friends about the man behind us at Mass, everyone sympathized. Most people had the same experience. And many of us, including me, leaned to the critical explanations. The man was just rude and self-centered or he didn’t understand the Mass, because if he did understand the Mass, he’d shut up and worship Jesus. They would have asked him the same question I wanted to ask: *Why are you here?*

Many of us, but fortunately not everyone. One friend, the writer Joanne McPortland, pressed the point that we should assume mental illness, autism, dementia or some other reason he didn’t have a filter, before we accused him of deliberately talking when he should have been quiet. Not knowing why he was talking, we should pray for him and let it go.

She pointed out that if others, including his wife, didn’t try to quiet him, they may know why he’s talking. In our parish, people might well know a fellow parishioner’s struggles and accept him as he is. Better he’s there than not there.

Later, I realized that if the couple had noisy children, I'd have accepted the distractions without a second thought, because for me children add to the pleasures of Mass. I also realized that the couple were sitting in the back row, which may have meant that one of them knew he was going to talk and wanted to bother as few people as possible.

Joanne being right, we are left with: 1) This person is annoying; 2) You don't know why he's annoying; 3)

Because you don't know, you must assume the best, that he doesn't know better or he can't help it; 4) That "do unto others" and "turn the other cheek" applies, even if he is being rude; 5) Therefore, you must make of the situation what you can, and that may mean mortifying your need (and it's a real need) for quiet and expressing active charity for the annoying person by praying for him.

40 Unique Ideas for Lent

By Marcel LeJeune, catholicmissionarydisciples.com

Many Catholics traditionally do something like give up a favorite food, watch less TV, etc. for Lent. These are good ideas, but below are some more unique ones that we have crowd-sourced from others.

While we are not required to "give something up" for Lent, Catholics are required to increase prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Here are some ideas to get you started.

1. Pray and fast for one particular person every day of Lent. Sometime in the Easter season, send them a message telling them what you did and why.
2. If you struggle with identity or self-worth, write down something nice about yourself every day.
3. Only buy things you absolutely need to have
4. Pray the rosary daily for someone that has caused you harm. Meditate on how much Jesus loves that person.
5. Work out every day.
6. Intentionally give sincere compliments to everyone you have a conversation with.
7. Prepare all your own food instead of eating out.
8. Only use screens for work/school.
9. Turn off all noise and distractions for extended periods of time (hours at a time).
10. Write a letter to 40 different people every day of Lent telling them what they mean to you.
11. Call someone you don't talk to regularly every day.
12. Daily Mass every weekday it's available.
13. 30 minutes (or 1 hour) of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament every day it's available.
14. Pray morning, evening, and night prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours.
15. Volunteer weekly at a shelter, soup kitchen, retirement community, etc.
16. Host a donation drive for a local charity.
17. Coordinate a day of service for a local charity
18. Go on a retreat, whether for multiple days or just one.
19. Let God choose your cross. In the morning, pray about what cross God has given you, then embrace it in faith as the will of God—to the best of your ability.
20. Go to Confession every week.
21. Gain an indulgence every week.
22. Start a new monthly donation to a great ministry or apostolate that you have never donated to before.
23. Offer daily prayers for your pastor and/or bishop. Let them know what you did at Easter.
24. Give up speeding for all of Lent.
25. Fast from your favorite meal every day.
26. Spend an hour a day reading Catholic books.
27. Invite someone who has few friends to lunch or coffee. Do this every week.
28. Surprise someone in your neighborhood with a gift of flowers, a meal, basket of goodies, etc.
29. Make bags of food, water, socks, etc for others and hand them out whenever you see a person in need.
30. Get 8 hours of sleep every night.
31. If you have a long commute, then do it in silence and prayer.
32. Daily games with family.

(Continued on last page)

mass intentions

| Date | Intention |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 2/25 SATURDAY | |
| 4PM | Pharmacy & Law students |
| 6PM | Members of the ATM |
| 2/26 SUNDAY | |
| 9AM | Bishop Knestout |
| 11:30AM | Will Langley |

stewardship of treasure

| Donations Received as of February 19 (Week 34) | | |
|--|------------|-----------|
| CHURCH | ATTENDANCE | OFFERINGS |
| St. Joseph's | 5 | \$150 |
| St. Elizabeth's | 23 | \$810 |
| St. Mary's | 17 | \$610 |
| St. Theresa's | 50 | \$1,280 |
| Total | 95 | \$2,850 |
| Outside Donations | | |
| Year to Date Received | | \$98,163 |
| Goal | | \$91,538 |
| Ahead/Behind Goal | | + \$6,625 |

please pray for

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Louise Serreno* | Michael Beavers |
| Gerry Hankins | Natalie Dodge |
| Clarence Moore | Roger Empson |
| Lexi Cox | Dreama Ritter |
| Sarah Wall | Marco Warner |
| Tammy Bennett | Chris Lambert |
| Margaret Wasilewski | Virginia Dy |
| Nic Ulate | Mary Muncy |
| Frannie & Rayburn Minton | Cindy Lambert |
| Sue Bailey | Jean St. Clair |
| Christian Lambert | Helen Petro |
| Shane Neal | Clinard Coleman |
| Archbishop John Kwofie | Joan Harrison |
| Pete Belcher | Joe & Yvonne Blevins |
| Lucas Boyd | Kyle Brown |
| Ralph Heldreth | Bobby Cole |
| Chris Jessie | Jeffrey Parkhurst |
| Leo Brown | Fr. Dan Brady |
| Carolina Ferrare | Elfie Forrest |
| Junior Aiken | Sarah Walters |
| Jeanne Hash | Everly Duns |
| Lara Marshall | Amelia Proffit |
| Carol & Jim Shumate | Maurice Law |
| Andrew Satmary | Zac Carter |
| Glenn Harrison | Dennis & Frances Savage |
| Donna Petro | Nancy Jo Testerman |
| Christian Marshall | Donnie Neal |
| Tina Rocchetti | Josh Cornwell |
| Alice Godin | John Shumate |
| Randy Snyder | Seth Waddell |
| Bryan Gunter | |

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FINANCE COUNCIL:

Kathy & Bob Buchanan, Randy Bolling, Doug Vance, Anne Danko, Jim Talbert, Jackie Shawver, Lydia St. Peter

parish news & events

- **Rice bowl** kits are still available at each church. 75% of your rice bowl money supports Catholic Relief Services' work around the world, and the remaining 25% helps fight hunger in our own community. Rice Bowl donations will be collected after Easter. All donations will be forwarded directly to the Diocese of Richmond.
- **Soup & Stations each Friday in Lent:** Throughout Lent, in addition to 10AM Mass, we will have 6PM Stations of the Cross and Adoration. This is a great opportunity to build our community in faith, as well as share our favorite meat-free soup recipes!
- The **Annual Diocesan Appeal** is upon us, and this year's theme is a great reminder of what the Lord calls us to do. The theme is *Sharing His Love with Others*. Your continued generosity to the Annual Diocesan Appeal and your faith in our ministries are proof that by offering the Lord what we can, He will provide what we need. The way the Lord shows His love through you reminds us that we are united as one Church, to come together and support our ministries as they provide for each of us. Thank you for your continued generous support of the Annual Diocesan Appeal!



Scan the QR code
to give securely
online

One does not live on bread alone, but on every *word*
that comes forth from the mouth of *God*.

- Mt 4:4b

birthdays & anniversaries:

BIRTHDAYS

FEBRUARY 27: Lisa French | **MARCH 4:** Lisa Neal

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LORETTA HAMMOND

(40 Unique Ideas for Lent, cont.)

33. Every time you go to Mass, find someone you don't know and introduce yourself.
34. Increase your charitable giving or start tithing.
35. Cut salt from all your food.
36. Pray in front of an abortion clinic for an hour a week.
37. Resolve to ask more questions of others than they do of you.
38. Choose something meaningful to donate daily.
39. Go knock on the door of a neighbor every day. Introduce yourself. Before you leave their house, ask them for prayer requests.
40. Have your family/friends come up with three suggestions and choose from the list.