**Lent 1 A Lectionary Catechesis**

 **Fr. Alan Hartway, CPPS**

 **Guardian Angels Parish in Mead, CO**

The readings challenge us to think about the dynamics and psychology of sin from the view of these ancient texts. Recognition of the truth of the human condition and authentic honesty about ourselves will result in an increase of yearning for Jesus. Sin is never comfortable to discuss, and should not be in a “hell fire and brimstone” sermon context. It is viewed In the Catechism always in relation to the salvation we have encountered in the Lord Jesus and his obedience of will. In order to begin to grasp the theology of sin in these readings, CCC 396- 412 beg serious study and reflection. While no one is asking for a “hell fire and brimstone” homily, the dynamics of our relationship with one another and God includes the problem and condition of sin. All this is in the part on the Creed, so it is fundamental to our beliefs. The wide mercy of the Psalm is in between the bookends of the Genesis and Romans reading. Listen to Allegri’s magnificent Miserere. It was forbidden under pain of excommunication to take copies out of the Vatican; Mozart as a teenager heard it once, left the concert, and wrote it out accurately from memory for his own use in 1771. He was disciplined by Pope Clement XIV at the time with an award for cleverness.

**Genesis 2, 7-9; 3, 1-7**

This is the setting and story of original sin. We’ve all thought we’ve heard it, but there are nuances and misunderstood parts always to be mined for a fuller understanding of this central Catholic teaching. For example, the patriarchal overlook and ignoring of vs. 6c “the man, WHO WAS WITH HER”, in other Eve didn’t go off searching the Garden where Adam was in devout and innocent prayer, to seduce him in turn. He was right there.

**Vs. 7: CCC 362, 369, 703** The human person, willed by God, is both physical and spiritual, a body filled with the breath of God. CCC 369 affirms the equal dignity and equality of being man and being woman in the image of God. “The word of God and his Breath are at the origin of the being and life of every creature.

**Vs. 8: CCC 378** Human work, even in the care of Eden, is a collaboration with God, not a burden.

**Vss. 1-5: CCC 391** Satan is understood as the “seductive voice, opposed to God”.

**Vss. 1-11: CCC 397** The Catechism understands our first sin as a loss of trust in God.

**Vs. 3: CCC 1008** Death is the consequence of sin, physically and spiritually.

**Vs. 5: CCC 392, 398, 399, 1850** The first temptation “to be like God” is to forget that we are already in God’s image and that there is a short cut to our ultimate destiny in God that we can take on our own. This is preference for one’s own self over God; we want to be like God, but “without God.” Creating a distorted image of God, humans then feared what they’d imagined. CCC 1850 defines our Catholic understanding of sin.

**Vs. 6: CCC 2541, 2847** First the Catechism explains the “economy of law and grace;” 2847 handily explains the difference between discernment of being tempted and giving in to the temptation.

**Vs. 7: CCC 400** Sin creates a shattered world, which dies because it is cut off from its root like a flower.

**Know your Faith:**

Define sin and original sin.

What is our final human destiny? Or Why did God make us?

**Live your Faith:**

What are the “seductive voices” of our culture and world today?

How and where do you see God at work repairing and reconciling the breach between the genders?

**Share your Faith:**

How does your work participate in the beauty of Creation? How do you share your trust in God?

**Worship:**

How do you see yourself giving yourself to God during the Mass? What is the “economy of law and grace”?

**Psalm 51, 3-4. 5-6. 12-13. 17**

**Vs. 6: CCC 431, 1850** Because sin is an offense against God, only God can forgive us, so we call out God’s name. Ultimately sin is “love of oneself even to contempt of God.” We think we know good and evil all on our own. This is the sin that permeates all our human lives. The dynamics at work are conscience and free will.

**Vs. 12: CCC 298, 431** God creates out of nothing, as with sin, so with life, God “gives life to the dad ad calls into existence things that do not exist.” Forgiveness is a condition that does not exist, but God pours out forgiveness for us.

**Know your Faith:**

How does God create a clean heart within us?

**Live your Faith:**

Do you forgive as you have been forgiven?

**Share your Faith:**

When you open your mouth, does praise of God come out?

**Worship:**

Does our life reflect the “joy of salvation”?

**Romans 5, 12-19**

The passage works by the rhetoric of comparing and contrasting Adam and Jesus Christ. It needs careful reading to grasp. St. Paul is explaining the origin of and salvation from sin. It is the economy of the Kingdom.

**Vss. 12-21: CCC 388** The Spirit comes “to convict the world concerning sin.” Jn 16,8

**Vs. 12: CCC 400. 402, 602, 612, 1008** Graphic list of the consequences of Adam’s sin is first in which all humans bear the consequences. “We have been ransomed … by the Blood of Christ.” I Pt 1, 18-20 The Cup of the New Covenant is accepted by Jesus in the garden from the Father’s hand itself. Jesus’ submission of will in the Garden of Olives is important for the effectiveness of the Passion. Finally we are reminded that we are the ones who chose death, not God who willed us to have life.

**Vss. 18-19: CCC 605** This citation begins to address the question of the “many” in the consecration and the “all” in this passage. Cf. also Mt 18, 14.

**Vs. 18: CCC 402** Just as all are implicated in the original sin, so are all called to salvation in Christ.

**Vss. 19-21: CCC 411** Christ is the “New Adam”; Mary is the “New Eve.”

**Vs. 19: CCC 397, 402, 532, 615, 623** The first citation does not say that pride is our first sin, but rather a failure and loss of trust in God. This is an interesting observation given the modern state of the world. Jesus trusts the Father, fulfilling the 4th commandment. Jesus’ obedience is the offering for sin acceptable to the Father.

**Know your Faith:**

How does the “abundance of grace and the gift of justification” come about?

Why do we call the sin of Adam, original sin?

**Live your Faith:**

How does your life show forth your trust in God?

What does “ransomed by the Blood of Christ” mean in your life?

**Share your Faith:**

Why is righteousness that lords it over others, not authentic, but a repeat of sin?

How do we share our faith in a “closed communion” Church?

**Worship:**

How is worship an act of trust in God?

How is obedience to God an act of worship?

**Matthew 4, 1-11 The Forty Days of Jesus in the Desert and the Devil’s Temptations**

Like the story in the first reading, the temptation of Jesus in the desert for 40 days is familiar to most, but many of the details remain obscure and difficult to connect with our faith. Why does this have to come before His ministry, just as why does this come for the catechumen at the beginning of Lent at this stage of the journey to Easter?

Vss. 1-11: CCC 394, 2849 Satan works to lead us to break by seduction with God.

Vs. 4: CCC 2835 We are hungry, but not for the apple of the Garden, nor the leaven of the scribes, but for the encounter with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

Vs. 10: CCC 2083, 2135 Our duty to God is love with all our heart. This love is worship.

Vs. 11: CCC 333 The protection of our Guardian Angels is from this passage.

**Know your Faith:**

What is the role of temptation on the journey of faith?

What is the response to temptation? What is our greatest human temptation?

**Live your Faith:**

What do you do with the temptations in your life?

What is the most satisfying reading that you do in the course of a day?

Why will temptations always arise even in the most advanced and matured faithful person?

**Share your Faith:**

One of our temptations is to have a rosy colored faith. How do we talk honestly about evil in the world?

Share your personal experience of being “out in the desert.”

**Worship**:

Reflect together on the petition in the Lord’s Prayer: “and lead us not into temptation”?

Reflect together on the first temptation toward material satisfaction, the second temptation against trust, and the third temptation about worship.

**Next Sunday: Lent 2 A: Genesis 12, 1-4a; Ps 33; II Timothy 1, 8b-10; Matthew 17, 1-9**