**Lent 1 C Lectionary Catechesis**

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| The Ash Wednesday proclamation focused on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, each the opposite of money, power, and fame. The gospel makes us consider the ways of the world as opposed to the ways of God. All God’s blessings belong to God; we return our money, power, fame and praise God alone. How do these readings mature us in our faith in Jesus Christ and help us get out into the desert with Jesus? |

**FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 26, 4-10**

The narrative of this thanksgiving harvests ritual implies a setting in early Israelite/Hebrew history. There is no temple, a primitive priesthood, no animal sacrifice, and a creedal statement that seems to be very old, reflecting a near memory of the Exodus, yet no mention of Moses or the crossing of the sea. The emphasis seems rather to be on the sense of “stranger in a strange land” and particular attention to one being an alien, and treating resident aliens with special care. The celebration commanded appears to be completely vegetarian. To a great extent, the exchange of gifts and ritual words parallel the making of a covenant. Strangely this reading makes no mention of a “chosen people”; the creedal statement of the gift bearer expresses thanks for God’s outstretched arm.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | How has God’s outstretched arm been present in your life?  God is portrayed here as creator of all we offer and savior from oppression. Share your thoughts on what this means in your own life. |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is the story you tell about the long historical journey of your family?  What is the faith of your extended family today? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | What part of the Creed is comparable to this story?  Why is it important for us to share with the exiles, refugees, immigrants, and strangers what is our own? |
| **WORSHIP** | What parts of the Eucharist are foreshadowed in this event from Deuteronomy?  Why is the Mass called the Eucharist and why is it important for us humans to show thanks? |

**First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 91, 1-2. 10-11. 12-13. 14-15**

It is from this psalm vs. 4a and vs. 11-12 that we have probably taken the idea that angels have wings which are not only symbolic of swift flight, but here in this especially representing protective power. The psalmist appears to be in his old age, expressing reliance on God’s strength. The psalm’s focus on God’s sheltering wings may also come from the image of the cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant, although few people but the high priests would have seen this object. These represent adoration and inspired awe. The whole psalm perhaps was for the priests who lived and worked in the Temple.

**Vss. 10-13: CCC 336** Despite our futile attempts to get around it, there is such a thing as sin; sin is most exposed for what it is in our relationship with God. In sin, humanity rejects God and our ultimately destiny with God. Our whole history reveals the presence of sin. Aside from the catechism, I have always found St. Augustine’s definition of sin the best: sin is “incorvata in se.” That is to say, the horns of a mountain goat that so curves in on its own skull that the horn can kill the goat. The phrase means, “curved in on one’s self”, most apt for our narcissistic culture. Love goes in the opposite direction.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is both attractive and important for our Church about those who dwell in the “shadow of the Almighty” in cloistered consecrated life?  What does the Bible and Church teach about angels? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | The psalm tells us that God will be near us in distress. Share a time when you felt this was true, and perhaps if you are able a time when you felt abandoned.  How have you experienced God’s love in your life through your guardian angel? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | What is the best way, in your view, to invite others to join us for Sunday liturgy?  What exactly is the evil or distress from which God delivers us? |
| **WORSHIP** | What does it mean for you to take the time and effort to attend Sunday liturgy and be in God’s house every week?  Explain the elements of mercy in the Mass. |

**Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: Romans 10, 8-13**

Romans 9-11 presents an anthropology of the role of the Jewish people in salvation. Paul is addressing those new converts from Judaism to Christianity to ensure their steadfast faith and to give certainty to the decision they have made for Christ. He is arguing for an awareness of the new creation in Christ, in which every human division of race dissolves into the union that Christ seeks for us. Our contemporary reading of the passages tends to speak of “no distinction between Greek and Jew” more broadly in terms of the racial prejudices in our culture in terms of diversity; college campuses are currently experiencing an awakening of the lack of diversity. For Paul the emphasis focused on the Lordship of Jesus over all. These are two different readings of this passage. The Lenten thrust here is the reconciliation of all in Christ as Lord. In other words, God stretches out God’s arm for all.

**Vss. 6-13: CCC 432** Jesus’ name both signifies and is in itself human salvation. The invocation of his name itself has the power to save.

**Vs. 9: CCC 14, 186, 449** If one belongs to Christ by baptism and faith, then one by definition proclaims Christ to others. The gifts God gives us as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier give structure to our Creed. In #186, the CCC states that the Church from the beginning used brief summaries of faith in the work of evangelization especially for those to be baptized. The earliest summaries tell the story of encounter with Jesus in the first proclamation of the Church, called ***kerygma***. Jesus is LORD; what is due Jesus is due the Father and the Holy Spirit. The Resurrection and ascension manifest the lordship of Jesus.

**Vss. 12-13: CCC 2739** “Transformation of the praying heart is the first response to our petition.”

**Vs. 13: CCC 2666** Jesus’ name means in Hebrew, “God saves.” Jesus is the Son of God who is invoked and called into our hearts in prayer, as the Resurrected One.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Why is the meaning of Jesus’ name important?  What is the shortest faith summary you can think of? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Is our faith just a matter of calling on the name of Jesus? Share your thoughts on this.  Our modern temptation is to think to save ourselves. Why can’t we save ourselves from sin? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | How can we make the presentation of our faith relevant to diversity and inclusion in our culture today?  What is the ***kerygma*** that the Church shares in evangelization work? |
| **WORSHIP** | Is the Mass addressed to Jesus or to the Father and why?  What are the gifts of God that we receive at the Mass? |

**Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: Luke 4, 1-13 The Temptation in the Desert**

The first temptation is about what we eat. Adam chose to eat what was not his; Satan tempts Jesus to eat what he could make out of stone, hence arrogance. Adam was tempted to become like God, and so ate the apple; Jesus is tempted to place himself higher than the Father in receiving the kingdoms of the world, not through the cross but through violence. Adam thought to escape death; Jesus was tempted to throw himself off the walls of the Temple and test God’s power to protect him from death, while instead he chooses the way of the cross. These three temptations face ancient Israel in the desert, too. Only Matthew and Mark tell us that angels attended Jesus at the end of this encounter with evil.

**Vs. 1: CCC 695** Anointing with oil is a primary symbol of the Holy Spirit. Both *Messiah* in Hebrew and *Christ* in Greek mean the same thing: the anointed One.

**Vss. 5-6: CCC 2855** The final doxology of the Lord’s Prayer repeats the first three in calling upon God; here the petitions become acts of praise, honor, and thanksgiving to God. The Son returns and restores the glory, the power, and the honor to the Father.

**Vs. 8: CCC 2096** “Adoration is the first act of the virtue of religion.” Hence the 1st Commandment is fulfilled.

**Vs. 9: CCC 2119** Satan tests God, hence violating the first commandment; God is not to be tempted or tested, because we owe our Creator our faith.

**Vs. 13: CCC 538** Jesus’ solitude in the desert does not leave him alone, but only to be tempted by the devil, whose three temptations recapitulate the three temptations of Adam in Eden and the Israelites in the Exodus journey through the desert.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What precisely is “adoration”?  Why do we think of Lent as a time in the desert? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What are your desert plans this Lent regarding practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving?  Share the great temptations in your personal life or of our modern culture. |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | What would you share with an atheist or agnostic about sin and temptation?  What are the false “gods” of this culture and/or world today? |
| **WORSHIP** | The Eucharist transforms our human thoughts about power, fame, and wealth. Share how you think this happens in a practical way.  How much silence is there in your parish’s Mass? |

**Gospel**

**Next Sunday: Lent 2 C: Genesis 15, 5-12. 17-18; Ps 27; Philippians 3, 17-4,1; Luke 9, 28b-36**