

# Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

P. O. Box 440, Whitehouse, Texas 75791

[www.wellspringcommunity.net](http://www.wellspringcommunity.net)

[frigus@suddenlink.net](mailto:frigus@suddenlink.net)

February 22, 2026

Brothers and Sisters,

Today, we celebrate the first Sunday of Lent. Our Scripture readings of today remind us that none of us is free from temptations and testing times. The first Adam was tested and failed. The second Adam, Jesus, also was tested. But he withstood the test and remained faithful to who he was and to the purpose for which he came. The Scripture readings of today also remind us of the gift of Grace that is always available to us, to enable us and empower us to walk faithfully even during testing and trying times. In the second reading of today (Romans 5:12-19) St. Paul reminds us of the abundance of Grace that is available to us. The grace of God and the gracious gift of Jesus overflow for all people. Sin has come through disobedience. Grace has overflowed through the obedience of Jesus, says St. Paul. Let us put our confidence in the Grace of God, especially during our difficult moments, as we continue our journey through life.

Today's first Scripture reading speaks of man and woman living in a land of abundance in total communion with God, with themselves and nature (Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7). In the midst of such abundance of grace, they faced temptations, testing times and failed to be true to what God made them to be and lost their sense of God and of themselves as God's special creatures made in His image. They made poor choices and lost the blessings they had. We too live in a land of abundance and are constantly being tested by the world around us. We are being challenged to make good and wise choices that reflect who we are. It is up to us to choose the call of God's grace or yield to the temptations of the world around us.

The Gospel reading of today (Luke 4:1-13) speaks of Jesus being tempted in the wilderness, rising above the temptations to a new power and strength and coming to call people to repentance and new life in the Kingdom of God. We meet Jesus making a deliberate choice of method to fulfill his mission and rejecting methods contrary to God's Will. Jesus went to the wilderness to be alone. God had spoken to him. He was given a Mission. He had to be alone with God and discern his plans before he began to fulfill his mission.

Certain things must be worked out alone with God. Certain times, a person must stop doing and start thinking and praying. Each person must give himself/herself a chance to be alone with God. Being alone with God, Prayerful discernment, Reflective Living, Solitude, etc. are all values that we must cherish and cultivate. Try to include a few quiet moments into your daily schedule for reflection and prayer during this season of Lent.

During his time in the wilderness, alone with the Father, Jesus was tempted three times. In the first temptation, we find Jesus refusing to use his power to meet his physical need. He had chosen to deny himself the pleasure of satisfying his physical hunger and becoming deeply conscious of his deeper and more urgent hunger and thirst to do the will of his father.... "Man does not live on bread alone but by the word that comes from the mouth of God," he said. He had renounced his personal need for comfort, benefit, pleasure, etc. and he remained faithful to that commitment. Eventually, he would declare, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work." (John 4:34)

In the second temptation, we find Jesus refusing to compromise/negotiate with evil forces, with lesser goals, morals and values. Jesus chose to surrender to the will of his Father. The tempter's offer was "all the power in the world" and it is "all the power in the world" that Jesus renounced. Eventually, Jesus would declare, "My kingdom does not belong to this world...my kingdom is not here." (John 18:36)

In the third temptation, we find Jesus refusing to display his power that comes from his Father's love. The tempter wanted a proof of the father's love by a display of power. Jesus chose the way of trusting, confident Love. Eventually Jesus would teach his disciples to surrender to the father's love just as he himself did, even dying on the cross.

Jesus taught his disciples, and he teaches us today to remain faithful to our commitments even when inconveniences, difficulties, failures, temptations, and other similar situations come our way. From the beginning of his ministry to death on the cross Jesus remained faithful to the Father's will as he proclaimed, "I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me." (John 6:38)

We are all called to choose God's way as Jesus did. It is not difficult to recite a creed, or make a profession of faith, but to live the Christian life is demanding and challenging and often difficult. We must make difficult choices to live our faith. Fine words are never substitutes for fine deeds. Full of life and energy or tired and weary, let us choose God's way and be faithful. Let us strive to be true to ourselves, to be authentic in all we say and do, to be men and women of integrity, to be steadfast in living our faith and let all our choices reflect who we are as followers of Jesus.

May your Lenten days of prayer, penance and almsgiving help you to be reborn in spirit, empower you to love without limits, teach you to pray constantly, help you seek the wisdom of God, enable you to live in compassion, challenge you to become more attentive and sensitive to the needs of the less privileged in your community and help you celebrate the joy of Easter.

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Scroll down to read the reflections on the Scripture readings of today's mass....**

# First Sunday of Lent

February 22, 2026

**Lent is a fitting time for self-denial;  
we would do well to ask ourselves what we can give up in order to help  
and enrich others by our own poverty. Let us not forget that real poverty hurts:  
no self-denial is real without this dimension of penance.  
(Pope Francis)**

## Collect

Grant, almighty God,  
through the yearly observances of holy Lent,  
that we may grow in understanding  
of the riches hidden in Christ  
and by worthy conduct pursue their effects.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

## Liturgy of the Word

Prayerfully read the first reading and then read my reflections below and spend a few moments of personal reflection. Do the same with Responsorial Psalm and other readings.

**Serenity is grounded in the conviction that everything is all right, that  
everything is in the hands of our loving Father.**

## Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7

In this excerpt, we meet man and woman living in a land of abundance in total communion with God, with themselves and nature. In the midst of such abundance of grace, they faced testing times and failed to be true to what God made them to be and lost their sense of God and of themselves as God's special creatures made in His image.

## **Psalm 51**

This psalm is often prayed by individuals and communities seeking forgiveness and mercy, flowing out from the steadfast love of God. The Old Testament period considered two sins, murder and rape/incest as sins that could not be atoned – murder lead to the death of the body and rape/incest to the death of the soul. Nathan confronted David with these two sins which he had committed (2 Sam. 11-12).

This great man, chosen by God to be king, had done something that could not be atoned. David threw himself at the mercy of God. This psalm reveals the heart of David as he realized what he had done. David appealed to God's steadfast, unending, covenant Love because he knew God would never break His covenant, even when man breaks it. His confession and prayer for mercy has now become part of our liturgy.

**Have mercy on me, God, in your goodness;  
In your abundant compassion, blot out my offense.  
Wash away all my guilt;  
From my sin, cleanse me.**

## **Romans 5:12-19**

Paul reflects on sin and its effects on the person and the community. He further reflects on the abundance of Grace. The grace of God and the gracious gift of Jesus overflow for all people. Sin has come through disobedience. Grace has overflowed through the obedience of Jesus.

**Reflect on how personal sin affects others in community. Reflect further on the power of Grace to transform your life.**

## **Matthew 4:1-11**

Mathew describes Jesus going through testing times while he was in intense personal communion with his father in the desert. In the first temptation, Jesus refuses to use his power for personal need satisfaction - for personal comfort, benefit or pleasure. In the second temptation, Jesus refuses to compromise/negotiate with evil forces - with lesser goals, values, morals, etc. Jesus chooses to surrender to the will of his Father. In the third temptation, Jesus refuses a "show-off", a display of power. Jesus chooses the way of trusting, confident Love.

**Reflect on testing times (temptations) in your own personal life, even in times of intense search for God and God's ways.**

**Saint of the Day, February 22 - The Chair of St. Peter, the Apostle and 21 other saints are remembered this day.**

In ancient Rome, this day was observed as “Ancestors’ Day”. People remembered the dead, especially their parents. The Christians of Rome began to celebrate this day in memory of Peter, their founding father and their first Bishop and so their true ancestor.

Why is today’s feast called the “chair of St. Peter”? Every Bishop has a chair from which he presides, preaches and teaches officially. In Rome, in the Basilica of St. Peter, an ancient wooden chair is preserved, which is believed to be that of St. Peter. Today’s feast honors this “chair”, this seat, this office...which means, it honors this unity of teaching and preaching authority.....it honors the unity of the universal Church. The chair is the symbol of Peter’s role and that of the popes as pastors of the whole Church. It is therefore a celebration of unity and a celebration of trust in the teaching authority of the Church. Let us pray for harmony and unity in the Church.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**You do not need to wallow in guilt. Wallow in the mercy of God.**  
(St. John Vianney)

