



## *Reflection from Bro. Louis Rodemann*

Ever since the early Christian communities structured their gatherings, the first Sunday of Lent has one of the narrations of Jesus' temptation in the desert. The desert experience followed Jesus' baptism by John in the Jordan when the Spirit of God descended in the form of a dove and a voice said: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Then the Spirit led Jesus into the desert.

The first reading from Genesis tells of Adam and Eve in the garden being tempted by the serpent to disobey God's directive, promising them power to be like God.

The Gospel is the story from Matthew of Jesus being tempted by the devil in the desert. Each of the temptations begin with "If you are the Son of God..." then take power. Jesus answers the devil's temptations with Scripture quotes from the book of Deuteronomy.

The second reading from Paul's letter to the Romans contrasts the effects of the two temptations: Adam and Eve's disobedience to God in order to attain power, whereby we are all made sinners; Jesus' obedience to God in refusing power, whereby we are all made righteous. (Recall that during the Easter Vigil in singing the Exultet, the unusual phrases, "O happy fault! O necessary sin of Adam!")

Psalm 51 is a heart-felt admission and supplication to God: we are sinners; renew in us a clean heart and steadfast Spirit, and through that Spirit bring us back into salvation in God. We are constantly reminded of God's unconditional love and assured of God's abundant mercy, compassion and forgiveness.

Because we are human, we are all in relationships of power (parent, teacher, director, manager, minister, counselor, etc.). Any power is legitimate and meaningful only if it becomes a means of service, exercised for the common good. As a practice during this Lenten season, might I review the situations in my life where I am in a position of power? How do I behave in this role? Am I mindful to make it a positive relationship? Am I acting for the benefit of others, and for the common good of all?

Discipleship is the topic of Lent. To enter fully into these 40 days, from Ash Wednesday to Easter Vigil, is to take up our cross, individually and communally, and follow Jesus. How am I specifically living out my discipleship in this time of my life? What are the crosses I have to bear? How can I live more faithfully, carry my cross more honestly? During this Lenten season, how can Jesus' message and example become more real and effective in my life? And how can we as St James community live as disciples of Jesus and carry our communal cross more freely?

*Peace,  
Bro. Louis*