



## **1st Reading: Genesis 2:15–17; 3:1–7**

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.'

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden"?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die." ' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

## **2nd Reading: Romans 5:12–21**

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned — sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgement following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. But law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, just as sin exercised dominion in death, so grace might also exercise dominion through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## Psalm 32

Blessed are those whose sin is forgiven:  
whose iniquity is put away.

Blessed are those to whom the Lord imputes no blame:  
and in whose spirit there is no guile.

For whilst I held my tongue:  
my bones wasted away with my daily complaining.

Your hand was heavy upon me day and night:  
and my moisture was dried up like a drought in summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you:  
and my iniquity I did not hide;

I said 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord':  
and so you forgave the wickedness of my sin.

For this cause shall everyone that is faithful make their prayer to you in the day of trouble:  
and in the time of the great water-flood, it shall not come near them.

8 You are a place to hide me in, you will preserve me from trouble:  
you will surround me with deliverance on every side.

'I will instruct you, and direct you in the way that you should go:  
I will fasten my eye upon you, and give you counsel.

'Be not like horse or mule, that have no understanding:  
whose forward course must be curbed with bit and bridle.'

Great tribulations remain for the ungodly:  
but whoever puts their trust in the Lord, mercy embraces them on every side.

Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, and be glad:  
and shout for joy, all you that are true of heart.

## Gospel: Matthew 4:1–11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' But he answered, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." '

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone." ' Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." '

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! for it is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him." ' Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

## Reflection:

"Turn these stones into bread," Satan says to Jesus. And Jesus rebuffs the temptation by saying to Satan, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from God." Imagine a host asking one of his guests, "Would you like some ham?" How perplexed the host would be if his guest answered, "Man does not live by ham alone"! The question was not whether the guest would like to eat ham and nothing but ham. The question was just whether he would like some ham now. Why not say, "Sure! Thanks!"? So why doesn't Jesus do the miracle? And why does he reject Satan's urging by pointing out that man does not live by bread alone? Of course, we don't live just on bread! But bread is one of the things by which human beings live. In another place Jesus himself explains that no good father will give his son a stone if his son asks for bread. Here is Jesus hungry and having only stones. Why shouldn't he have bread instead? When a guest says to the host who is offering him ham, "Man does not live by ham alone!" he might be using these words to communicate to his host the thought, completely perplexing in the circumstances, that human beings live on other stuff besides ham. But, of course, there is another interpretation. The guest might also be telling his host, graciously, that he is full. There are other things to eat besides ham, and a person who has no ham doesn't need to be hungry, because he has eaten an abundance of those other things. And that is what Jesus is telling Satan, isn't it? Anyone who has the word of God does not lack what human beings need to live. "No thanks," Jesus is telling Satan: "I'm full." This is the message to Satan, and also to us. Jesus, who is the Word of God, gives to every person who will receive him what they need to live, even if they have no bread. And, for good measure, Jesus gives them bread, too. He, the living cornerstone, gives himself to his own as the bread of life.