



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

**2nd Reading: Romans 5:12–21**

**Psalm 32**

**Gospel: Matthew 4:1–11**

## 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.