

The Readings on This Day

****Click on the links for the Bible Verse(s)*

First Sunday in Lent

Each year, Lent begins with a synoptic account of the temptation of Jesus. Jesus was truly human, suffering from the devil's temptations no less than we, and so he can stand by us when we are tempted. We too conquer evil with the power of God's word: and that word for us is embodied in Christ. In worship, we hear that word and eat the food of God.

[Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7](#)

Jesus withstood temptation, but we do not. Genesis 2–3 provides a foil to the gospel by presenting its opposite. This ancient tale of the origins of human suffering has much wisdom to offer. Although we do not encounter talking serpents, we do disobey God, and we do eat false foods, and we do invite others to join us in disobedience, and we do know shame and sexual sorrow.

[The Psalm for the Day](#)

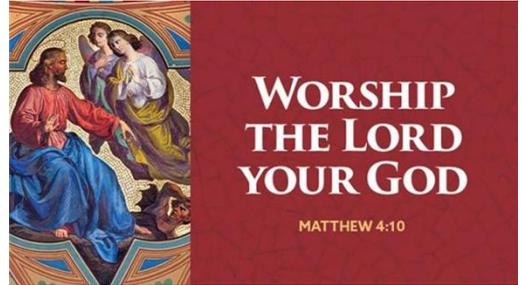
In singing [Psalm 32](#), we join with Eve and Adam: we have sinned, and we beg God for forgiveness, which will bring us to joy. We gather with all the faithful to pray, and together we hide away, no longer in the bushes, but now in God.

[Romans 5:12-19](#)

Paul's analysis of the Genesis 2–3 story is helpful in our time. Not interested in probing the details of the ancient narrative, Paul uses the story to illumine Christ. The ancient story tells of sin and death, and Christ brings us to grace and life.

[Matthew 4:1-11](#)

We begin our Christian life with baptism and then, like Jesus, face temptations. Each temptation as described in Matthew has symbolic meaning for us: we are



tempted to survive apart from the food from comes from God, to assume that God will miraculously protect us, and to worship the world instead of God. God's Word protects us, and angels attend us.