

Father Jim's Weekly Bulletin Article for February 11 2018

The Season of Lent: Lent begins this Wednesday. We will celebrate the traditional Ash Wednesday Masses with the distribution of ashes. These ashes are symbolic of the commitment we have made to a Christian life, our failures, and our redemption through the mercy of God. We mark ourselves as sinners, but as sinners living in the blessed hope of our Savior. Allow these ashes to take root in our hearts and minds. Let them truly be signs of hope and renewal for each of us in our Christian lives. Next Sunday our candidates for full communion in the Catholic Church, and those preparing for Baptism, will participate in a welcoming ceremony at St. Peter in Chains Cathedral. The ritual is called the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion. Like all of the rituals we celebrate during Lent, however, it is not just about those new to the Catholic Church. All of us are elect, meaning that we have been chosen by God. All of us are called to continuing conversion. Each of these men and women are both signs to us and proof of the blessed hope for which we all wait. Allow this season to truly be one in which we recognize who we are as blessed chosen of God. Allow this season to truly be one in which we come to reflect more closely that blessedness in the image and likeness of God.

Readings for next week: Genesis 9:8-15; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:12-15

Reflection: Leading another into temptation is not the sort of thing we would expect from a good person, much less from God. It is only in the wake of having faced temptation, however, that Jesus becomes a credible voice for reformation. He proves that we can face temptation and triumph. We might object, "Jesus was God whereas I am just an ordinary person". Our objection is not just a surrender to sin, but a rejection of the Spirit as well. Jesus triumphs, not through his power as God, but through the power of a human being reliant upon the Holy Spirit. It is with the very same power of the prayer and grace that we are enabled to meet temptation. Failure results not so much from an inherent inability to resist temptation as from a lack of faith in God's promise to be with us and within us until the end of time.

1. Share an experience of suffering or temptation which later helped you to help another.

2. Study a photograph of yourself. Look for evidence of God's presence in the picture.

Prayer: There are times, Jesus, when facing temptation seems all but hopeless. We have struggled so long, and yet sin remains with us. Remind us of your presence, Lord, even in the midst of temptation. We recommit ourselves to hope and reliance upon your saving presence.