

Homily – Rite of Election

March 2019

Today, led by the Holy Spirit, we follow Jesus into the wilderness where he is tempted by Satan, and tested by his heavenly Father. The wilderness is a desolate place of chaos. Jesus fasts for forty days and responds to Satan's temptations by insisting that

- We are to live according to God's word, not mere bread;
- We are not to try to manipulate or test God;
- We are to walk in God's ways, not those of the world.

Luke's gospel tells us that, when he had finished the three temptations, "the devil departed from him *for a time.*" We know that Jesus will eventually be victorious over Satan. However, he will have to climb Calvary first. There, on the Cross, Jesus will definitively overcome the forces of evil once and for all.

The story of our salvation does not end in the wilderness, but, rather, in the kingdom of God. That kingdom is already among us – whenever people show compassion for one another – wherever people work together for the common good -- -where people reach out to help immigrants who are looking for a safe place to raise their families – where we ensure that children are kept safe from abuse.

These are ongoing challenges. So, we are called to continuing conversion, especially during Lent. We are to walk in God's ways, to incorporate into our lives the values of the gospel – whether we are catechumens or candidates, sponsors or family or friends – lay or clergy or religious. There are no exceptions! We need to face these challenges every day of our lives!

From the wilderness Jesus leads us to the cleansing, refreshing, life-giving waters of baptism and new life. Let us ask God to guide and strengthen all of us for this segment of our journey through Lent that leads to the Easter sacraments and full participation in the sacramental life of the Church. We look forward with great anticipation to the joy and wonder of that day.

During Lent we join Jesus in the wilderness, realizing that we are both tempted by Satan and tested by God. We need not fear. God will not abandon us. God will give us all we need for the journey and will nurture and strengthen our commitment to walk in his ways. Dear Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe, watch over us and bring us closer to your beloved Son Jesus! *Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven!*