

2020 Rite of Election for 2/29 and 3/01 2020

My dear friends, as we gather in prayer and worship on this First Sunday of Lent, and celebrate the beautiful Rite of Election, the Word of God makes a very deep impact upon us. The first reading, taken from the Book of Genesis, tells us the story of how it is that we in the human race had become captives of sin and death. At the creation of man and woman God intended us to live in a state of natural happiness. He placed us in a garden. God provided for all our needs. And He gave us the very precious gift of freedom. Adam and Eve were free people, living in a state of friendship with God, each other, and the rest of creation.

Our happiness is not something the spirit of evil is interested in! Satan, the tempter, plays upon the freedom of Eve, and then of Adam, tricking them into using their freedom in the wrong way. The consequence of this has been the introduction of sin, death, and even of creation itself being out of balance, in a state of disharmony. Instead of bequeathing to their children a legacy of love and peace, Adam and Eve left us a legacy of pride, disunity, and disconnection from God. And while the Bible puts this in the form of a story about Adam and Eve, it is really the story of each one of us! We have been created good, and we were born good, but born into a world where the wounds of sin make their mark upon us from our first breath. Yet, when God looks upon us, He sees His own image! He sees the goodness and the original destiny He had for us to be happy! And He promised the human race that He would send a savior!

God has “elected,” that is, chosen the human person for salvation in Christ Jesus, our Lord, the redeemer of our humanity! Through the blood of His cross our sins are washed away! Through His resurrection He renews all creation – including us in our mortality, giving us the gift of eternal life! He sends us the Holy Spirit to help us while we are yet still in the world of sin, so that we might live as His new creation!

My friends, God has chosen you, “elected” you, because you are made in His image. He is the parent who loves His child! He is the Father attending to the wounds of your soul! He is the groom rejoicing at the sight of His bride! And today this “election” is made manifest as the Church officially welcomes you as members of her body. This membership will be sealed in the waters of baptism, the oil of chrism in confirmation, and sharing in Holy Communion in the Eucharistic Sacrifice at the Vigil of Our Lord’s Resurrection on Holy Saturday night! In these sacraments you will be “marked for Christ” with an indelible mark – deeper than any superficial tattoo upon your skin, because it is the marking of your heart and soul for the Lord!

But, becoming a new creation in Christ means living in a new way! And here we learn from the example of Our Lord when He endured His temptations in the desert, as we heard in the gospel proclamation for today. The tempter will still tempt you with ideas of worldly glory, of your own ego, and of false power. The evil one knows you are a free person, and he will attempt to move you to use your freedom in the wrong ways, just as he did to our first parents in the Book of Genesis, and just as he tried to do with Jesus, in the

desert. We are still in the spiritual battle of this life! And so, we must actively resist the tempter, as Jesus did! We must call out the evil we see when we see it! We must have the humility of heart to recognize when we have taken a wrong turn, and repent of it. And most of all, we must not be ashamed to call upon the help and strength of the Divine Assistance by submitting ourselves to Christ for forgiveness and renewal. As St. Peter admonishes us, we should “cast our cares upon Him, because He cares for us.”

Today you are among the “elect” of God! In the name of the Church I am honored to welcome you and enroll you! And, I ask you to remember from this point forward, as our Holy Father, Pope Francis has said, that you are not merely disciples of Jesus, rather, you are missionary disciples from this day forward! You have received the Good News! Now you must share it with others!

Dear Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe, watch over us and bring us closer to your beloved Son Jesus! *Ven*, Holy Spirit, *Ven*!