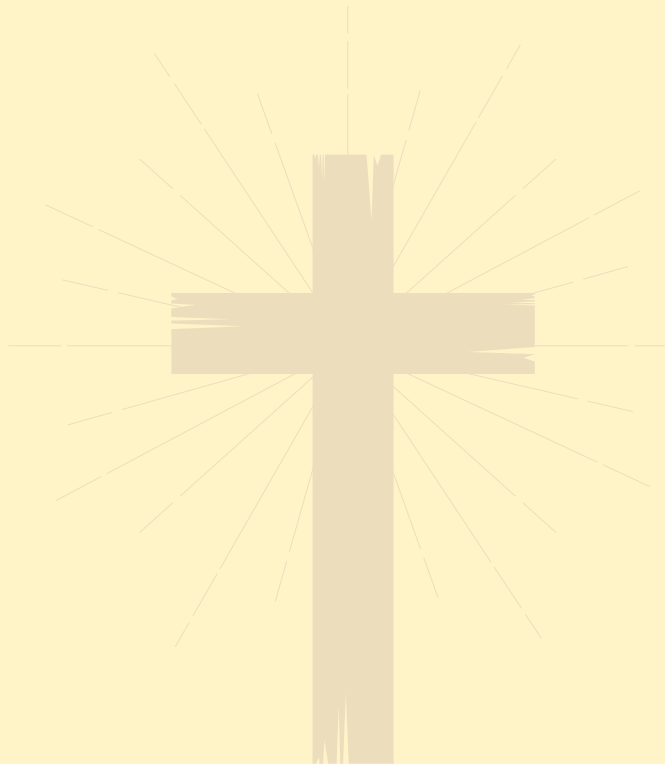


1ST SUNDAY OF LENT, 6 MARCH 2022

A Life-Generating Option



Message of *Laudato Si'*

This rupture is sin. The harmony between the Creator, humanity and creation as a whole was disrupted by our presuming to take the place of God and refusing to acknowledge our creaturely limitations.

This in turn distorted our mandate to “have dominion” over the earth (cf. *Gen* 1:28), to “till it and keep it” (*Gen* 2:15). As a result, the originally harmonious relationship between human beings and nature became conflictual (cf. *Gen* 3:17-19). It is significant that the harmony which Saint Francis of Assisi experienced with all creatures was seen as a healing of that rupture. Saint Bonaventure held that, through universal reconciliation with every creature, Saint Francis in some way returned to the state of original innocence. This is a far cry from our situation today, where sin is manifest in all its destructive power in wars, the various forms of violence and abuse, the abandonment of the most vulnerable, and attacks on nature.

Laudato Si' #66

Take a little time to consider the aspect of sin. Sin is usually understood as what I did wrong. However, sin should be properly understood within the context of areas in our life that breaks or alienates us from our relationship with one another and with God. The Pope's letter invites us to consider sin in relation to how we treat the most vulnerable and our attitude towards nature.

GOSPEL – LUKE 4:1-13

The temptation in the wilderness

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit through the wilderness, being tempted there by the devil for forty days. During that time, he ate nothing and at the end he was hungry. Then the devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to turn into a loaf.' But Jesus replied, 'Scripture says: Man does not live on bread alone.'

Then leading him to a height, the devil showed him in a moment of time all the kingdoms of the world and said to him, 'I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms, for it has been committed to me and I give it to anyone I choose. Worship me, then, and it shall all be yours.' But Jesus answered him, 'Scripture says: You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.'

Then he led him to Jerusalem and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said to him 'throw yourself down from here, for scripture says:

He will put his angels in charge of you to guard you, and again:
They will hold you up on their hands

in case you hurt your foot against a stone.'

But Jesus answered him, 'It has been said:

You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'

Having exhausted all these ways of tempting him, the devil left him, to return at the appointed time.

REFLECTION

The three temptations are worth reflecting on because they are marked by an unhealthy love of self or narcissism. If Jesus gives in to them, they may result in his ministry failing to be life-giving and life-generating.

The first temptation points towards an attitude of self-satisfaction or self-preservation. It is to say, "I am in need, and I must be satisfied." The second temptation points towards the question of what do we depend on? The second temptation challenges us to consider whether we are persons who depend on everything and anything other than God. It can be a self-sufficient attitude where we say, I only need myself. The third temptation is the attitude of self-elevation or promotion. We may unconsciously think too highly of ourselves or possess the desire of wanting people to see how great we are.

The temptation of Jesus is something that we may have experienced. We may focus on ourselves and our needs to the extent that it prevents us from seeing and considering the needs of others. Let us ask ourselves simple questions:

- Do we think too highly of ourselves in what we say and do and get upset when people do not treat us that way?
- Do we seek only to be "happy" at the expense of others? For instance, my wife or even domestic helper has no other life than to make me happy.
- Do my possessions give me comfort in a way that I think they are all I need?
- Are there aspects of my life when I generously give and serve without expecting anything but so that all of us can grow to what God calls us to be?

LENTEN EXERCISE

Our consideration for this week of Lent is whether we can recognize a part of us that may be narcissistic. When things are only about us and what we want, we cannot be life-generating persons. How can there be a “you” and “other” when our world is only about “me”?

MY STAND

Who are my neighbours? Identify those in need around us. This is to help us concretely share and care for the elderly, the poor, the abandoned, the migrants, and the domestic helpers among us and those under our employ.

Action:

- Have we been abusive, verbally, physically, or psychologically to others, such as our loved ones? For instance, we have been abusive to our parents, children, or wives?
- If we have been abusive and cannot treat our domestic helpers with dignity, it is better not to have one. Make a stand by acting justly and lovingly towards them by helping them find employment in other places.
- Give just wages and even occasional treats like a meal (if none is usually provided or a short holiday) to the migrants working for you. Treat them as you would like them to treat you. Always act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly among them.
- Regularly check in on the elderly in your parish community, especially the ones who live alone.



**MALACCA
JOHORE
DIOCESE**

www.mjdiocese.my
f mdiocese
@ malaccajohorediocese
caritasmjd.mjdiocese.my
creationjustice.mjdiocese.my



MJD
50
2022

www.lenten.mjdiocese.my
f MJDLenten