



# Bible Study - First Sunday of Lent Year A

St. Maria Goretti and  
St. Peter Claver  
Parishes

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**“The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.”  
Matt: 4:10 NABRE**

## Reading I: Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7

**Increase My Faith - Let Me Praise You Honestly.** The dominant theme during this Lenten Season is: *“Lord, increase my faith.”* This is the first in a series of Bible study lessons on how to strengthen our faith. This week, the lesson focuses on honesty and sincerity in worship. *“Don’t come into the presence of God to impress Him with something He gave you!”* These words of Rev. T. D. Jakes capture the theme of honest worship. Worship is our faith in God in motion. It is the response of the believer’s entire being, which includes the emotions, body, will, and mind. *Honest worship* is giving God all He has given us. As C. S. Lewis wrote, *“It is in the process of being worshiped that God communicates His presence to men.”* This is why we worship God, not to impress Him, but so that He can inhabit us.



*Honest Worship Is  
Worshipping God Alone  
For Who He Is.*

The first reading gives the reason for Jesus’ suffering and death, which is our focus during Lent. *“Male and female He created them.”* (Gen. 1:27) God created them above every creature and expected obedience in return. Rather than worship Him with obedience as gratitude for their existence, Adam and Eve failed to trust God to provide for them. They gave in to the temptation of *food* (or hunger for knowledge -the fruit of the tree), *honor* (“...the serpent said, “You will not die...” Gen 3:4-5), *pride* (“...they knew that they were naked...” 3:7). These are the same tests given to Jesus in the desert in Matthew’s Gospel. Adam and Eve came into God’s presence with what He had given them and could not honestly worship Him because their faith was weakened by pride, greed, and selfishness. Obedience is honest praise. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** When we give praise and worship to God in the liturgy of the Eucharist, are we just covering up for our failings, or do we worship God for who he is?

## PRAISE

Praise can be defined as an act of worship or acknowledgment by which the virtues or deeds of another are recognized and extolled. The praise of man toward man, although often beneficial (1 Cor. 11:2; 1 Peter 2:14), can be a snare to man (Prov. 27:21; Matt 6:1-5). But the praise of God toward man is the highest commendation a person can receive. Such an act of praise reflects a true servant’s heart (Matt 25:21; 1 Cor. 4:5; Eph 1:3-14).

The praise of man toward God is the means by which we express our joy to the Lord. We are to praise God both for who He is and for what He does (Ps 150:2). Praising God for who He is, is called adoration; praising Him for what He does is known as thanksgiving. Praise of God may be in song or prayer, individually or collectively, spontaneous or prearranged, originating from the emotions or from the will.

The godly person will echo David’s words, “My praise shall be continually of You...And [I] will praise You yet more and more” (Ps 71:6, 14). (From Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

## Reading II: Romans 5:12-19

**Increase My Faith - Let Me Praise You Honestly.** St. Paul gives us an example of honesty in worship through the redemptive example of Jesus Christ. The highest form of worship one can give is obedience to God. St. Paul compared Adam’s disobedience and the accompanying cause of the fall of man with Jesus’ complete obedience and the consequences of the actions of each on humanity. (v. 19)

Adam’s act of disobedience resulted in the physical and spiritual death of his descendants. His actions showed that he did not worship God honestly. We inherited Adam’s sinful nature. We are sinners not only because we commit acts of sin, but also because Adam’s sin corrupted the human race and made sin and punishment inevitable for his descendants, as well as for himself. However, Christ’s act of perfect obedience was honest worship of our God. By dying, He made all who trust in Him righteous, apart from their works. It is by imitating Jesus’ act of obedience that we can offer total, complete and honest worship of God. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Do you ever pray to be obedient to the will of God?

### Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11

#### Increase My Faith - Let Me Praise You

**Honestly.** Honest praise and worship of God is giving Him everything He has given us without reservation. We worship honestly when we know that even when we are at our worst, God is at His best. His grace is sufficient, so our faith is strengthened when we stand before God with our flaws exposed. We cannot worship God correctly if we dwell in the shadows of unconfessed, unrepented and concealed sins. It takes courage to be totally honest with God. But the more honest we are with Him, the more He inhabits us. The greater His presence in us, the greater our faith will be. The magnitude of our faith dictates the honesty of our praise and worship. **Lord let me praise you honestly.**

In the Gospel, Jesus gives us examples of obedience and trust that form the basis of faith. The newly baptized Jesus is led by the Spirit to be tempted. In a sense, He was led to **praise** and **worship** God by fasting in the desert for forty days. Scripture tells us that He was hungry and it was in His hunger that was tested first. The Greek word for tempt is **πειράζω peirazo** (pi-rad'-zo); *to test, i.e. endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline.* This word, as used in this Gospel, does not have the English meaning to persuade one to do evil. In this instance, temptation, the test, is a challenge of a person's obedience or trust in God.

Jesus was tested, just as we are, in three basic areas in life. They are: **1. Food-** bodily comforts and pleasure (v. 3); **2. Honor** and acceptance by others (v. 5); and **3. Wealth** and **power** (v. 10). His response to each test was the same, although He used different words in each instance. To the first test His response can be paraphrased as: I will trust in the Father, He gives me my daily bread. His response to the second test can be paraphrased as: I don't crave the admiration of men, for My Father's grace is enough. To the third test His response shows His intention to fast as a form of praise and worship of God in the desert; **"The Lord, your God, shall you worship and Him alone shall you serve"** (v. 10 **NABRE**). In Jesus the Christ we have a perfect example of honest worship. The purpose of Lent is to lead us, like Jesus, to trust only in God and keep our promise of obedience. Our self-denial in prayer, fasting and almsgiving should become honest worship of God. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What prevents you from worshipping God with honesty, sincerity and obedience?

### Pray About It!

#### Monday

Read Exodus 24:14. Read Make a promise that you will keep during Lent.

#### Tuesday

Read Matthew 16:23. Keep away from those who tempt you.

#### Ash Wednesday

Read Matthew 4:1-11. What tempts you the most? Today is a day of Fasting.

#### Thursday

Read Matt. 4:6-12. Pray the Lord's Prayer.

#### Friday

Today is a day of fasting. Attend mass and pray the Station of the Cross.

#### The Catechism of the Catholic Church Teaches about Prayer and Praise

**2639** Praise is the form of prayer which recognizes most immediately that God is God. It lauds God for his own sake and gives him glory, quite beyond what he does, but simply because HE IS. It shares in the blessed happiness of the pure of heart who love God in faith before seeing him in glory. By praise, the Spirit is joined to our spirits to bear witness that we are children of God, testifying to the only Son in whom we are adopted and by whom we glorify the Father. Praise embraces the other forms of prayer and carries them toward him who is its source and goal: the "one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist."

**Resources:** Matthew, Daniel J. Harrington; Collegeville Bible Commentary, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minn., p. 868; *Living Liturgy Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities Year A 2017*, Joyce Zimmerman, C. PP. S. Kathleen Harmon, S.N.D. de N., Christopher W. Canlon, S. M. Liturgical Press Collegeville, Mn. pp. 70-73; Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New American Bible, revised edition* © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner. Tempt- Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994, 2003, 2006 Biblesoft, Inc. and International Bible Translators, Inc.); Naked and Unashamed, T.D. Jakes Treasure home, Shippensburg, Pa. 1995.

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