

# St. John's Church School

## Lent

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### ***LENT I***

When the serpent tempted **Adam** in the Garden, Adam disobeyed God, and ate of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. By his disobedience, he was cast out of the ***earthly paradise*** (The Garden of Eden) into the wilderness. Because of Adam's sin, the rest of mankind who followed him was separated from God through disobedience to his commandments.

But God had a plan to restore his people, and put that plan into action when He sent his Son, Jesus, to walk in a path of obedience. When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, Jesus chose the way of obedience instead (today's gospel lesson, Matthew 4:1-11 or BCP p. 126). Thus he began to walk in the way that led him to a another Tree: the Tree of the Cross, where his perfect obedience (an obedience even unto death) cancelled out Adam's disobedience, and opened to us the gates of the ***heavenly paradise***, and brought us home to God.

- 1 Corinthians 15:22: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive".
- Romans 5:19: "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous".

We begin Lent with the ashes of "Ash Wednesday." When we receive the ashes, we admit that we ourselves are the sinful children of sinful Adam, and that our sin has separated us from God. "Remember, O man, that dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." During the forty days of Lent, we travel from Adam's tree—the tree of our disobedience—to the tree of the Cross, the tree of Christ's perfect obedience; we travel from the garden of Eden to the garden of the empty tomb, the place of Christ's death and resurrection. We travel from sin and death to righteousness and life eternal.

Lent therefore is our preparation for Easter. We prepare to celebrate Christ's death and resurrection, and **our preparation is this:**

**That we die to sin and rise again to a new life of righteousness.**

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We pray that all sinful desires may die in us and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in us. To help us reach this goal, the Church trains us in three spiritual disciplines commended by our Lord and the prophets and apostles, each of which strengthens us in the three virtues that bind us to God, faith, hope, and charity.

These are three:

- *Fasting and Abstinence*: reducing the quantity and/or quality of what we eat and drink. We learn to deny ourselves, to make sacrifices, to learn to say “No” to greedy appetite, so that we may feed and feast in FAITH upon the Word of God.
  - *Compare First Temptation of Christ, to turn stones into bread*: “Man does not live by bread alone but by every word which cometh forth from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).
- *Prayer*: in the practice of daily prayer we learn to hunger for God’s kingdom and his righteousness, we learn to put our HOPE in his saving plan, his gracious promises, and his almighty power to save.
  - *Compare Second Temptation of Christ, to tempt (test) God instead of trusting and hoping in him*. “”Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God” (Matthew 4:7)
- *Almsgiving*: in giving of our own to those in need of body or soul (money for the relief of those in need, as in our mite boxes), we practice CHARITY (godly love) of neighbor. What we give up (in fasting) we give to others (almsgiving), in denying ourselves (fasting) we are trained to serve others (almsgiving).
  - *Compare Third Temptation of Christ: to gain a kingdom of the World by serving the Devil*. Almsgiving shows that our all goods belong to God, and are used in the service of his love, not greedily and devilish pride. “Thou shalt worship thy God, and him only shalt thou serve”.

**Activity: Have students fill their Lenten Journey Calendars**