



Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7; Psalm 51;
Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

First Sunday of Lent – Year A

THE FULLNESS OF THE DESERT

How many deserts we must cross to reach the “promised land” of freedom—a journey which invites us to bring to completion the person we are called to be, not the one who does whatever he/she pleases.

The desert of daily problems; the desert of abandonment and solitude; the desert of sorrow; the desert of trials and temptations; the desert of interior aridity in which the heartbroken yearn for a new chance in life....

And yet none of these deserts—which we travel in solitude over and over again—can give us the grace of conversion that this *favorable time* of Lent offers us. In fact, we should not embark on this desert experience alone but with Christ, under the action of the Spirit. Yes, because the desert opening up before us is a new exodus during which we can experience afresh the love of God, who wants to draw us to himself and speak to our heart (cf. Hosea 2:16).

It is the Spirit who incites us to move ahead in this arid desert and who makes it possible for us to overcome the proud self-sufficiency of the lost Garden of Eden. When everything fails, we can remain serenely aware that we are not sufficient unto ourselves, that we are not the “lords and masters” of anything, if we are not living under the sovereignty of God. And since on this journey it is not necessary for us to lie either to ourselves or to others, we are able to recognize our situation as creatures, that is, our precarious human condition, which is exposed and vulnerable to the problems of life. We are able to humbly acknowledge that we are dust of the earth; that we have been shaped by God’s creative hand and brought to life by his breath. Even though we remain poor earthen vessels, we nonetheless hold an infinite treasure. We are creatures of earth, shaped by heaven!

Realizing this truth, we should not be afraid of our nakedness, the heritage of sin, but embrace it as a chance to allow ourselves to be clothed by the grace of the new Man: Christ Jesus.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we beg you to lovingly accompany us
on our journey through the desert this Lent.
Guide us to the freedom of the children of God,
which is freedom from suspicion and fear,
so as to live the trust of those who allow themselves to be led
by the breath of the Spirit and not by their egos. Amen.

Fr. Massimo Tellan