

To find why Lucifer, that is Satan was expelled from heaven in scripture we have to do some digging. The story is allegory and is spread through the Bible in Ezekiel, Isaiah, Daniel, and several other locations. It is a bit more obvious in the Book of Revelation. The bottom line to the story is that Satan wants to not only be like God, he wants to replace God. He thinks that he is smarter and better than God in every way. He convinced about 1/3 of the angels to support him; which led to Saint Michael and the Heavenly Hosts through the power of God defeating them in battle and throwing them out of heaven.

Since heaven is inaccessible and impervious to attack by Satan and his minions, he gets back at God by attacking his greatest creations, the creatures that God formed in his own image and likeness. You, me, all people, all the children of God. Satan hates us because we remind him of God, of his defeat and he knows that we are destined to return to God once our time here on Earth is complete. He can't hurt God directly, but he can try to hurt him indirectly by tempting us into sin and trying to prevent us from reconciling with Our Heavenly Father before our death.

Original Sin, all sin is based on disobeying God. The basic elements for sin are demonstrated in today's reading from Genesis. Eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a sin because God said for them not to eat from the tree. It is that simple. Fundamentally, lying, stealing, adultery, murder, any sin you can name is disobeying God. The next element of sin is you have to know that what you are doing is disobeying God. Eve knew that eating from the tree was a sin; she even told Satan that it was disobeying God. Finally you have to decide to do commit the sin anyway. Notice that you don't have to actually commit the act, the decision itself is a sin. In this case, Eve ate from the tree and Adam, of his own free will joined her in committing the sin, in disobeying God.

Why were they so tempted, so willing to give up the Garden of Eden, risk their wonderful relationship with God for a piece of fruit? There wasn't any lack of food or lack of variety. There were more than two trees in the Garden, one to eat from, one to avoid. There were probably hundreds if not thousands of different kinds of trees and bushes to eat from. God is always more than generous to us his children.

The temptation was to be like God in all things. To know what God knows, therefore to be as smart as God. To be able to make God like decisions even to decide to over rule God when it pleased them.

How many kids, even adults wear sports jerseys with their favorite player's name and number? How many children when we ask them why they want to pursue a career cite wanting to be like someone they love or admire as the reason. We have an intimate and vital bond to God. We are drawn by our nature to want to be with God. His goodness, his generosity, his wisdom, all these things and many more draw us to want to imitate him. Remember the WWJD bracelets? This is a very human tendency; it is hard wired into us. Striving to want to imitate God is not bad, to think that we are like God, or even smarter than God, that is a problem and a mortal sin. That is the sin that got Satan booted out of heaven.

No one but God can be God. Seems obvious doesn't it? But how often do we see people deciding to 'be God' in our world today? In deciding to prevent someone from being born through artificial birth control or abortion, or by killing them right after birth, aren't we deciding that we are smarter than God? Deciding to euthanize a human being, a child of God, isn't that deciding that the family and the Doctor are smarter than God? When we execute a prisoner, are we not making the State into God? When one person murders another, aren't they deciding that they are smarter than God? Keep in mind that a large part of the psychology behind a mass shooter is their desire for the god-like power of deciding who lives and who dies right up to and including the time of their own death.

By definition God always was and always will be. He knows all that will ever happen including our thoughts, and has known it since before the beginning of time. Because of who he is, God cannot make a mistake. God know the struggles I would have with writing this homily and who would agree or disagree with Church teaching, his teaching before the beginning of time. If a person determines God has made a mistake, including a person's sexuality, then God can't be God and the person who is making these claims must be god because they are greater than God. The same sin that got Satan booted out of heaven.

If you ever have a conversation with someone of Irish decent and they reply; "and the devil quotes scripture"; they just called you a bald faced liar. In the Gospel today, the devil quotes scripture. Satan tried to trick Jesus into breaking the natural law he established by turning a rock into bread.

Satan tried to get Jesus to prove that he was God by throwing himself off the Temple wall. Finally Satan tried to get Jesus to claim wealth that was already his by offering the kingdoms of the earth if he would only subordinate himself to him. In all of these temptations, Satan lied by twisting the truth and tried to diminish Jesus, to make him less than who he is, the Son of God.

Because we are children of God, because we are made in the image and likeness of God, because we are made to return to God, anytime we diminish God by pretending to be smarter or greater than God, we diminish ourselves. Anytime we fail to obey God and sin, we make ourselves less than who we are, beloved children of God.

Lent is a time of sacrifice, but more importantly a time for introspection; a time to take a hard look at whom we are, what we believe and how we live. Wherever who we are, our beliefs or our lives don't match up with what God through his Church has taught us, we need to take steps to resolve the issue. Father Gaul is more than happy to help through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, I'm available to answer questions and for spiritual direction. If the clergy are scary to you, then Tricia our Director of Religious Education is always happy to answer questions.

Please, let us take this advantage of this time of grace and join us in renewing our relationships with God who loves us.