



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent-Year A-March 1<sup>st</sup> 2020

***Readings: Genesis 2: 7-9, 3: 1-7, Psalm 50, Romans 5: 12-19,  
Matthew 4: 1-11***

‘FAKE NEWS ! FAKE NEWS !

You will not die.

Who told you that?

God puts you in this Paradise and He bans you from enjoying it?

Oh, just that special tree eh?

The one that gives you intimate knowledge of GOOD (and evil).

You know why He’s doing that? Let me tell you, sister. He’s doing that because He’s afraid that if you do, you’ll become just like Him. No more Lord and creature schtick. You’ll be His equal. Looks good doesn’t it.’

The Book of the Genesis gives us the first example of what ‘The Donald’ has dubbed ‘Fake News’ – that category of information that has just enough truth in it to lead you into believing the lie that it really conceals. It is the misquote, the partial revelation, the smear, the misrepresentation of the other, the corruption of truth.

Fake News, Fake news – Did you know that Jesus was such an anarchist and opponent of God that He actually dismissed the whole of the Old Testament.

Look it up.

Jesus said ‘Hang all the Law and the Prophets!’

OK. OK. So you’re smarter than that, you know the whole quote, that’s unfortunate.

Jesus also said that there must always be poor people – it was a command. ‘The poor you must always be with you....’

OK OK you’ve read the fuller version of that too. I’ll come back when I’ve thought of something to outsmart you.

FAKE NEWS may be a recent discovery of ‘The Donald’ but, in truth it is as old as Man himself. The story of Man’s fall from Paradise hinges on this simple deceit.

Let’s see how it works.

First and foremost it is a work of the enemy. The enemy is very subtle. He does not try a full frontal assault on the Truth. He comes in at an angle. (If Satan restricted himself to blatant lies and went round in horns and a tail even the dumbest of us would see him coming).

His opening shot is not a lie. It is a deliberately misleading question.

‘Did God really say .....that you can’t eat any of the fruit of this garden?’

The implication is that God is not generous, that He is restrictive, unreasonable, repressive, selfish. In a moment we, with the benefit of hindsight, know where this embittered but charming creature is coming from. This was the moment to close down the conversation. It passes. Eve corrects his error. ‘We can eat any of it but not the one at the centre.’ Eve engages with the tempter. She entertains him. That is always a mistake in our encounter with temptation and the Tempter himself. We are all tempted. The problem arises when we don’t dismiss that temptation but rather invite the Tempter in, give him a fireside chair and pour him a sherry while you discuss the relative merits and demerits of the attractive alternatives to obedience and, as it transpires, to LIFE.

Having dragged the real facts out of Eve, Satan then moves to the lie direct. This unreasonable and ungenerous God is trying to keep you under control by FEAR. He is jealous of you. He knows that you are one step away from being His equal. Religious obedience is a form of slavery. Get yourself free.

‘You will not die. You will be like God.’

We now know, as Eve did not, the devastating effect of that outrageous lie. Remember too that the Deceiver is no friend of Man. He wants us to share his exiled and damned fate. He never mentioned the Tree of Life, only the one that leads to death. Thank God that our parents never ate of the Tree of Life and thereby eternally enshrined evil in eternity.

Eve is given the choice of obeying God who has made her and put her in Paradise or this slimy but plausible creep who talks a good game about freedom and self-fulfillment.

The rest is our history and will not be resolved until a much later Tree. But there is a lesson here in our day to day lives. What leads us away from God is not in our interest. What claims to be freedom is, all too often, the short road to a demonic slavery. The tactics of the enemy are subtle – a half truth is usually more convincing than a straight lie but eventually the straight lie will out and we must always measure it against the love and generosity of God.

News media, social media, spin doctors, religious phonies, pyramid salesmen, they all push a plausible line but their ‘truths’ are partial, edited, compromised, doctored with an end in view. Reducing the argument to slogans, inhibiting free speech, dictating the language of debate, censoring and excluding the witness of the Faithful. These are not new tactics in a very ancient war.

We just need to be aware and, on our guard,, whether are listening to the daily propaganda of the BBC, the churnings of Government, the shrill squawks of the lobby groups etc etc. We need to measure everything against the Word of God and make sure we have the whole story – not

just the bit Satan wants us to buy into. We have experienced the mortal consequence of disobedience and our participation in the intimate knowledge of the fruit of Evil.

The antidote is to be found in that Tree which Satan forgot to mention – now disguised as death on the Calvary – the Tree of Life where our sacrificed Saviour reigns and to which our Lenten journey summons us, that by His precious blood we may yet regain the Paradise of God.

GOOD NEWS.