

## **The First Sunday of Lent – 02-22-2026**

“The Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.”

On Ash Wednesday at the application of the ashes we were reminded that we are dust and unto dust we shall return.

And now on this first Sunday of Lent we are reminded again in the opening lines of the first reading that we were formed from the clay of the earth but with one very important additional point; The Lord God...blew into the man’s nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.

God formed man from the clay of the earth but he brought him to life by breathing his divinity in him but with that came great responsibility.

And we all know that Adam and Eve failed in their responsibility by disobeying the boundaries that God had set for them.

In the gospel today Jesus was being tempted by Satan. Jesus is God and at one point, tiring of Satan’s diabolical incursion, he reprimanded the devil saying, “You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.”

Finally, Jesus banished him from his sight saying, "Get away, Satan!" Satan is lost. There is no hope for his redemption but not so for human beings. Consequently, God is very patient with us.

Some of you might remember the TV sitcom, Good Times – James Evans and Florida Evans and of course the most famous character of all, James J.J. Evans Jr. It was one of my favorite portrayals ever of family life on TV.

Anyway, there was one scene in which the father, James, was testing God and his wife Flo didn't approve at all. Flo was a very elegant and quite religious woman.

I don't remember why James was testing God but he jumped up on a chair and declared that James Evans was giving God ten seconds to respond or else. Then he looked at his watch and began his countdown – 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5...5...5.

His watch stopped before the ten seconds were up which really humbled him and got him thinking. He suddenly got the picture – God is in charge. He knew that God could have just as easily stopped his heart as he did his watch that day.

But God doesn't exactly work that way. Although it is true that one day our hearts will stop beating and that will be in God's time it won't be because God is angry with us. It will just be our time and then our judgement will come. But before that

happens we need to make sure that we aren't disobeying the boundaries that God set for us.

These boundaries are in place for our good. They're like lines on a road. If we keep our cars within the lines we will usually be fine and we will reach our destination safely and in a timely manner.

But if we stray outside the lines we put ourselves and others in danger. Nobody would deny that the lines on a road are good because they are meant to keep us safe.

This is what Church teaching is all about. All of her teachings are based on love in that they are meant to bring all of us to the end of our life's journey safely to heaven.

No one said it was going to be easy. Jesus suffered and died for us and called his disciples, which includes all of us, to deny ourselves and follow him to Calvary because he knows what is good for us and exactly what we are made of.

"The Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being."

Clay was only the first ingredient. His Divine spirit gave us the spark of divine life and also the potential to follow him to Calvary and ultimately all the way to heaven.