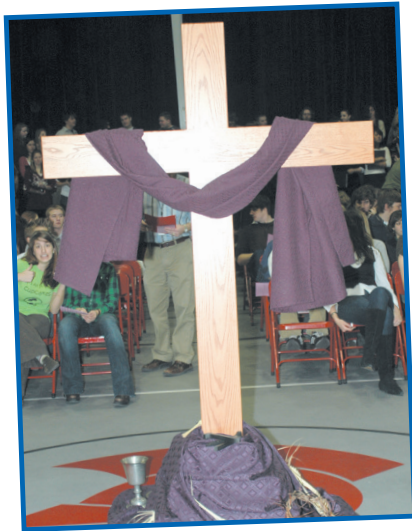




SPiRiT

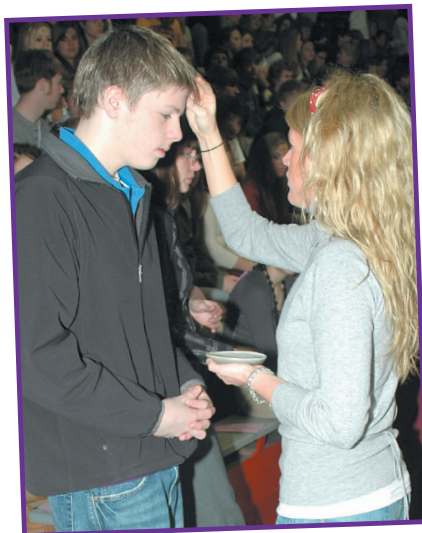


- Enjoy silence
- Feed the birds
- Accept a compliment
- Make the Stations of the Cross
- Exercise
- Pray Psalm 100
- Listen to a sibling
- Walk instead of ride
- Ask a friend for a favor
- Risk wearing something new
- Make a wish for your future
- Read Isaiah 53
- Draw



- a symbol of resurrection
- Dance
- Encourage someone
- Go to Mass every day
- Fast from junk food
- Thank a parent
- Write a poem called "Spring"
- Listen to Mahler's Symphony No. 2, "The Resurrection"
- Pray the Our Father
- Write a lyric to live by
- Look at your baby book
- Read a biography
- Read Jeremiah 31.31
- Learn the words of a hymn
- Tell a child a story
- Go fishing
- Sing at church
- Write a letter to the editor
- Read Exodus
- Compliment an adult
- Eat breakfast
- Close your eyes and listen
- Dress up
- Thank God for being alive
- Give money to Operation Rice Bowl
- See a play
- Eat a salad
- Communicate without social media for a day
- Make hot cross buns
- Go a day without spending
- Celebrate a Passover seder
- Bike to a place you went as a child
- Plant flowers
- Mend a quarrel

- Play catch
- Make a drawing or collage called "Spring"
- Remember ten good things about each day before you go to sleep
- Ask God for what you need
- Read the editorial page
- Hike at sunrise



LENT





Only the

GOLD

by Pat Marzolf

With both my sports I've always set records. In seventh grade I won six individual events in swimming and had the overall high-point. I was state champion. I set three Catholic School records—the 50 breaststroke, 100 and 50 butterfly. I still have those.

In high school my freshman year I was the youngest person in swimming to ever make state and finish that high, 12th. In tennis that same year I was the youngest person ever to make it to state. I work really hard in school, too. I always make a 4.2 GPA. A 4.0 is an A. To get 4.2 you have to get A's in honor classes.

I apply the pressure to myself, you know. Okay, I do it because I want to, but people expect it, too. Then when I didn't do as well, I felt like I was letting people down.

In tennis, our number-one singles player graduated. I expected, "I'll be number one. I'll win regions, whatever, go to state." I started out number one, but then I got put down to number four. My record was sliding; my state ranking was dropping and dropping.

When I started the season, teachers would say like, "Hey, Pat, number one this year?"

"Yeah, I don't know." People

weren't saying stuff like this to put pressure on me but it did.

I was also having a tougher time keeping my grades up. At mid-tri in the spring my grades slipped to 4.1. The president's honor roll is 4.2 and above, so I only made the gold honor roll. I was disappointed.

Tennis was bringing me down in everything. I felt I wasn't doing what my parents wanted either.

My mom used to play tennis. She always came to matches but never cut in with her advice. But I'd be talking like, "I just can't figure out why I'm not playing very good this year." It was like asking a question, too. So she tried to help me, but I took it the wrong way.

"I think you're not moving your feet enough, and on your forehand you're not stepping into the ball."

She was right. I was keeping an open stance, so the ball hit the net more.

"You're dropping your head on your serve."

It was getting frustrating. I was listening to my coach, then I'd go home and my mom would tell me what she saw. She thought I wanted to know. I thought I wasn't doing good enough for her. I wasn't thinking straight. I felt like I wasn't doing what my parents or the coach wanted. He had been my coach since I was eight.

When we played Sibley at the beginning of the year, I played one singles and won 6-0, 6-2, like a real easy win. By the time we played them later in the season, I lost to the number-four player 7-6 in a third set. I was playing terrible, falling apart, and worse, letting the team, my school down.

Geometry was the one class that was giving me trouble. Math had been my best subject but not geometry. We had a huge project, a third of our grade. We had to design something and do all the blueprints, sketches, and mathematical stuff for it. I chose to do a green room—like a green house. The tennis regions were three days after the green room was due. My coach told me I should be resting.

The night I totally cracked up it was 1:30 in the morning. I was working

SUNDAY GOSPEL

1st Sunday of Lent

Jesus chooses his identity.

NARRATOR: Then the Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tempted by the devil. Jesus fasted 40 days and 40 nights. At the end he was hungry.

TEMPER: If you are the Son of God, command these stones to turn into bread.

JESUS: Scripture says, "Not by bread alone do people live but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."

NARRATOR: The devil took Jesus to the holy city and set him on the parapet,

the very highest point, of the temple.

TEMPER: If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. Scripture says, "God will order angels to take care of you; with their hands they will support you, so that you never stumble on a stone."

JESUS: Scripture also says, "You shall not put the Holy One your God to the test."

NARRATOR: The devil then took Jesus up a very high mountain and displayed

before him all the magnificent kingdoms of the world.

TEMPER: All these will I bestow on you if you bow down and worship me.

JESUS: Away with you, Satan. Scripture says, "You shall worship the Holy One your God; only God shall you adore."

NARRATOR: At that the devil left Jesus, and angels came and ministered to him.

Matthew 4.1-11

so hard on this project. I just didn't know what to do anymore. I felt so angry. I shoved all the tennis and swimming trophies on the floor. I just said, "I'm going to bed." That was Thursday; the project was due Monday. Friday I didn't work on it. By Saturday my parents knew I was crashing; we had a really long talk.

"Nothing is fun anymore," I told them. "Not school, not tennis."

"We could care less if you played singles, junior varsity, or if you don't play tennis at all," my mom said. "Or, if you're number one in the world, just as long as you're happy."

They always came to watch and showed support, but we never really talked about what they expected before. They always said, "Good job, nice job."

The anger built up partly about swimming. At 5 a.m. I swim for an hour and a half. Swimming is my favorite sport. I've been more successful at that than tennis. My tennis coach wanted me to dedicate myself to the tennis team, so I had to stop swimming in the morning, but I made the night swim practices from 6:30 to 8:30 after tennis from 2:30 to 5:00.

Then I'd come home and start my homework after that. I'd also talk to

my friends. You don't want to lose your friends. Maybe five friends call a night. You can't say, hey, I have to go, so they feel like you're snubbing them. I don't want to talk to one friend and not to others. I was up usually until at least 12:30 every night studying.

I couldn't swim at all anymore in May. I knew I was getting out of shape. It was a terrible feeling and created a big worry for me. My dad was a swimmer in high school. He taught us to swim. I started swimming competitively when I was 10.

But when I talked with my parents, I found they think like I do. The only success is happiness. You can have all the records or grades in the world, but if you're not happy, you have nothing.

"All we care about is your happiness," my mom said when we talked.

"We love you. We want you to be happy. We don't care if you're winning or losing or whatever," my dad said.

That just kind of basically turned the stuff around, you know.

I was scared to talk to my coach, but he told my mom how frustrated I was. She told him we talked about it. I thought he lost all confidence in me, when he moved me from number one to number four, but he told me he thought I'd feel more confident at number four. He wasn't disappointed in me.

"I would never want you to hate tennis. I'm proud of you and all you're doing besides tennis."

If I have to choose, I'll choose swimming. I haven't played tennis all summer, so I don't know. The season ended well. I won regions. Last year I made it to state on the team; this year I made it as an individual, too. I'm happy with that.



QUESTIONS 1 What tempts the author to think he is not good enough? Who does he want to be? What drives him? What angers him? 2 How are the pressures the author experiences like your own? Where do your pressures come from? 3 What do you regard as happiness? 4 Who does the devil tempt Jesus to be? 5 What drives Jesus? Who does he choose to be? 6 What does Jesus regard as happiness? As holiness?

Who are we human beings?

In Sunday's first reading Creator God works like a potter in wet dirt to shape a human out of earth. Then Creator God blows the breath of life, the spirit, into the human form so this new creature becomes a living being.

This story from Genesis 2.7 expresses two truths. First, humans come from the earth. In Hebrew, Creator God forms an adam from the adamah; in English, a human from the humus, an earthling from the earth. The ancient storyteller wants us humans to recognize our origins are from the same elements as earth itself.

The breath of life God blows into the human expresses the second truth. We humans have spirit, God's own breath, animating us. We are embodied spirits. We are both of the earth and of God.

In Genesis 2 Creator God also plants a garden, making a home for the human, a place to live in harmony with earth. Creator God makes animals and the human names them, expressing human kinship with all that is. Creator God builds a second human from the bone of the first, making humans male and female (Genesis 2.21-23). Creator God gives the humans only one command: eat from any tree but one—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Sunday's first reading also includes Genesis 3.1-7, the story of the first human choice. This is the part of the creation story that parallels the story of Jesus' temptation in Sunday's gospel.

The serpent in the Genesis story tempts the woman to claim she is like God—immortal. Serpents symbolize immortality among ancient people. The story tells us the woman sees how beautiful and appealing the fruit on



the tree appears. She is using her body's senses of sight and taste.

The woman's choice to eat from the tree expresses the truth that human beings are free. We can choose. We have to learn for ourselves what is good and what is evil. Our senses want us to taste the delicious, to feel good, to see and hear what is beautiful. Our feelings express spiritual longings, desire for love to last. Our minds remember and give us longings to understand.

Sin is an abuse of the freedom God gives human beings so that we are capable of loving one another and of loving God.

Catechism of the Catholic Church #387, also 408



We are made with a spiritual openness to God and all that is good, but we are free to choose our way and bound to live with the consequences of our choices.

We inherit our ancestors' knowledge of good and evil in our Jewish and Christian scriptures. These traditions name such actions as murder, lying, sex outside marriage, and stealing as sins because they tear apart human community and relationships. Our tradition values worshipping God alone and serving no lesser being or goal.

Adam and Eve didn't lose paradise for the rest of us. They are us. We humans learn through experience what is good and what is evil.

Humans choose

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that Creator God made. The serpent said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'"

But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Genesis 3.1-7

FAITH in ACTION

- 1 What does the Genesis story tell you about who we humans are? What characteristics of animals do we share? What characteristics of earth do we share? What characteristics of God do we share?
- 2 Is the woman's choice more like a fall or more like a step up? Why?
- 3 Make a commitment to change a bad habit or develop a good habit during Lent.
- 4 Celebrate the gift of your humanity by celebrating an Ash Wednesday prayer time. Make a commitment to do one of the actions on the Lent cross on the cover. Mark each other with ashes using the words: "Remember you are human. Serve God who gives you life and loves you the way you are."