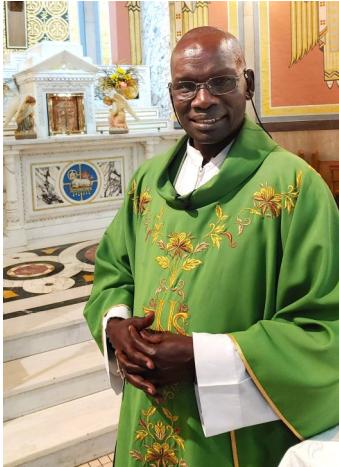


PASTOR'S REFLECTION  
The First Sunday of Lent  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2026



**Rev. Louis Okot, MCCJ,  
pastor**

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

When we become blinded by what we want for ourselves, tempted by excess we know is not good for us, or focused only on a worldly vision of happiness, we can lose our balance and our sense of who we are meant to be. In those moments, we also risk losing sight of the nourishment that only faith and a living relationship with God can provide. Our restless longings and reliance solely on ourselves can quietly become an invitation to abandon the very person God calls us to be.

Today, on the First Sunday of Lent, Matthew's Gospel brings us into the wilderness with Jesus. Led by the Spirit, Jesus fasts for forty days and nights and is then confronted by the devil. What unfolds is not simply an ancient story but a profound revelation of how temptation works and how it can be overcome. In the wilderness, Jesus faces three temptations that mirror the struggles of every human heart.

The first temptation appeals to physical hunger. The devil urges Jesus to turn stones into bread. Jesus responds with words from Deuteronomy: "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." Jesus reminds us that our deepest hunger is spiritual. We may satisfy our material needs and still feel empty. When life becomes difficult, do we turn first to God in prayer and trust, or do we exhaust ourselves trying to fix everything on our own? Lent invites us to remember what truly sustains us.



The second temptation challenges Jesus to test God's protection by throwing himself from the temple. Even here, the devil quotes Scripture, twisting it for his own purpose. Jesus responds again with Scripture: "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test." Faith does not demand constant proof or dramatic signs. True trust rests in God even when outcomes are uncertain and answers are not immediate.

The third temptation is perhaps the most seductive. Jesus is offered all the kingdoms of the world in exchange for worship. Power, control, and recognition are placed before him. Jesus firmly replies, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only." In this moment, Jesus reveals himself as the true King, not one who seeks domination but one who serves God alone. Unlike Israel's failures in the wilderness, Jesus remains faithful, showing us what obedience rooted in love looks like.

Throughout each temptation, Jesus relies not on his own strength but on the Word of God. Scripture becomes his defense, his anchor, and his guide. When the devil departs, angels come to minister to him, reminding us that faithfulness, even in struggle, is never unnoticed by God.

As we begin this Lenten journey, let us see it as a time of renewal and recommitment. Make room for prayer, reflection, and generosity of heart. Listen for the quiet voice of God that has sustained you through life's joys and trials. Be attentive to those around you who may need your compassion, your patience, or your presence. Above all, turn to God each day for the grace you need. Live this Lent with intention, humility, and trust.

*Give us grateful hearts, O Father, for all your mercies, and make us mindful of the needs of others.  
Bless, O Lord, your gifts to our use and us to your service. Blessed are you, O Lord God,  
King of the universe, for you give us food to sustain our lives and make our hearts glad.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—Book of Common Prayer*

Yours in Christ,  
Fr. Louis

**OUR LADY  
OF GUADALUPE  
FAMILY OF PARISHES**



**HOLY FAMILY CHURCH**  
**ST. BONIFACE CHURCH**  
**ST. JOSEPH CHURCH**  
**ST. LEO THE GREAT  
CHURCH**  
**ST. THÉRÈSE LITTLE  
FLOWER CHURCH**