**THEME:** GOD FIRST

**READINGS:** Deut. 26: 4 – 10/ Rom. 10:8-13/ Luke 4: 1– 13

1st Sunday of Lent

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On this very **first** Sunday of Lent, the Word of God reminds us that **God is first and he must be first in our lives**! In the first reading, Moses instructed the Israelites to place God first in their lives. Centuries later, Jesus demonstrated how to place his Father first in our lives (*cf*. Gospel reading).

FIRST READING:

In anticipation of the Israelites entering the Promised Land, Moses instructed them to place GOD FIRST when they entered it and prospered. He knew his people were capable of abandoning God once they succeeded; he had in mind the precedence of his people worshipping the golden calf and claiming it had delivered them from slavery in Egypt.

Moses instructed that: they were to place God **first** by offering him the **first** fruit of the land and confessing the humble beginnings of their ancestors and how God had made them great. Similarly, beloved, when we succeed or make good progress in life, let us not forget the God of our success or progress.

Some of us, like the Israelites of old, have a problem handling success or progress. For instance, a student passes his/her exams and the first thing he thinks of is, not about thanking and praising God, but going out to ‘chill’. Where is God in this?

Yes God may help us to succeed, but **his priority is not success but faithfulness**; so **let us be faithful to God! He should be first and above our success**!

GOSPEL READING:

In the story of the gospel reading, Jesus was tempted three times, but he remained **faithful to his Father**; he placed the **will of his Father above everything else** (cf. John 4:34).

THE FIRST TEMPTATION was for Jesus to turn stones into bread after his fast. This meant that he was tempted to use his power/position for selfish gains, or to ‘bribe’ people to become his followers. The good news is that Jesus resisted and overcame this temptation by making the WORD of his FATHER FIRST: ‘Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God’ (Deut. 8:3; Luke 4:4).

IN THE SECOND TEMPTATION, the devil showed Jesus all the earthly kingdoms and promised to give them to Jesus if he worshipped him. Thus, Jesus was tempted to worship a ‘god’ other than his Father, or to compromise on his faith and mission, but he did not give in.

ON THE THIRD OCCASION, JESUS WAS TEMPTED to be sensational or to put God to the test by jumping down from the pinnacle of the Temple. Again, Jesus overcame this temptation by putting GOD FIRST – and not to the TEST. Students do not examine their teachers, and so we should avoid putting God to the test. We should, for instance, avoid always looking for signs and wonders before believing in God.

CONCLUSION:

Beloved, let us put GOD ALWAYS FIRST:

* When we succeed in life, let us remember our humble beginnings and remain faithful to God who blesses us.
* When we are tempted to misuse or abuse our power or position, let us remember where the power or position has come from and remain selfless and humble, making GOD FIRST.
* When we are tempted to compromise on our faith/principle or worship another god, let us remember the FIRST commandment, and maintain GOD FIRST.
* When tempted to be sensational, let us seek to decrease so God will increase as the FIRST, AND SUPREME BEING! Amen!