



Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace

Cathedral of the Honolulu Diocese • Founded 1843 • National Historic Register

First Sunday of Lent

February 22, 2025

Beloved Disciples of Christ,

Greetings of peace, love, joy, and hope!

“Resisting Temptation, Embracing Grace: A Call to Conversion”

Ash Wednesday ushered us into the Season of Lent, a sacred time not merely a routine tradition but a necessary moment to pause, reflect, and return to the Lord. In a world overwhelmed by conflict, division, moral confusion, and spiritual fatigue, Lent is God’s gentle yet urgent invitation to rediscover His goodness, kindness, and mercy. These gifts, however, were not cheap. They were won for us through the sacrifices Jesus embraced in His Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

This First Sunday of Lent reminds us that even Jesus Himself faced temptation. The devil tried to lure Him with hunger, power, glory, comfort, and security, temptations that still tempt the human heart today. Jesus could have chosen the easier path, but He refused. He knew that giving in would compromise the mission of love entrusted to Him and allow evil to triumph. His “no” to temptation was already a sacrifice, a victory that strengthens us in our own struggles.

The temptations Jesus faced reveal a truth we cannot ignore: we, too, are tempted in countless ways. The world often portrays sin as attractive, convenient, or harmless. It promises happiness without sacrifice, pleasure without responsibility, and fulfillment without God. Whether it is dishonesty, selfishness, infidelity, indifference to the poor, or the pursuit of comfort at others’ expense, temptation always disguises itself as the easier path. But does it ever give us lasting peace or true joy? It does not. It leaves us empty, restless, and far from the life God desires for us.

Lent calls us to confront this reality with honesty and courage. It is a season to look deeply into our hearts and acknowledge what needs to change. It is time to turn away from sin and choose the path of grace. Jesus has already shown us that temptation can be resisted and that evil does not have the final word. He is our strength, our refuge, and our victory.

Today, more than ever, the world needs conversion. Our families, communities, and society are longing for light in the darkness. When we allow God to transform our hearts, we become instruments of that light. Our repentance becomes a witness. Our renewed faith becomes a sign of hope. Our return to God becomes an invitation for others to follow.

I invite everyone to make these Lenten days true moments of grace. Let us allow Christ to reshape our hearts so that we may radiate His presence in a world desperately searching for meaning, healing, and salvation.

May this Lenten journey lead us to deeper faith, renewed hope, and the joy of Easter’s victory.

Your Friend in Jesus,

Fr. Pascual