

1 Lent A 2008
St. Raphael, Springdale
St. John, Huntsville

One of my favorite T.V. shows while I was growing up was "Gilligan's Island." But you know, even though I loved the show, I was never sure what to hope for: on the one hand I always hoped they would get rescued, but on the other hand I was glad they didn't so there would be more episodes! I really like the episode when they got rescued but then accidentally got ship-wrecked back on the same island: it was the best of both worlds!

I'll never forget one scene where you really see how naive poor Gilligan is. They are sitting around a long table and discussing the possibility of repairing a radio and using it to call for help. The Skipper says that he cannot fix it and it's hopeless, and Gilligan's says, "He's right." But then the Professor says that they could use seaweed for batteries and make it work, and Gilligan's says, "He's right." Then Thurston Howell, the millionaire, says that the signal will not be strong enough to reach the mainland, and Gilligan says, "He's right." And after each person's comment Gilligan says, "He's right," or "She's right." Finally in exasperation, the Skipper says, "Gilligan's we cannot all be right!" And Gilligan replies, "He's right!" The scene is rather silly, but it underscores a very important fact: when you don't know whom to believe, you'll believe anyone.

In the first reading today we see that Gilligan was not the only one who was naïve, so too were Adam and Eve.

They both have heard God tell them if they eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they will die. And after hearing that, I'm sure they thought: "He's right." But now Satan tells them the exact opposite: they can eat and they will not die. And what do Adam and Eve think? Just like Gilligan, they say, "He's right!" You see, the real problem for Adam and Eve is not who's right and who's wrong, but rather whom will they believe? Will Adam and Eve trust what God tells them or what Satan tells them? We know the tragic answer, don't we? When you don't know whom to believe, you'll believe anyone.

I have been fascinated watching the presidential election campaign: it's almost as entertaining as Gilligan's Island, and sometimes I wish all the candidates were shipwrecked on a deserted island...and not get rescued! But have you noticed how all the candidates are anxious to get the votes of the independent voters? You see, the Republicans pretty much know whom they will vote for and the Democrats have also narrowed down their field. But the independents are up for grabs: they are kind of like Gilligan who can't make up their mind and choose a candidate. If you listen carefully to each candidate, behind their stump speech is one basic message: "Believe me!" You see, more than anything else in the world, they want your trust. Why? Because once they have your trust, they will have your vote. Once you decide who to believe, you'll follow their lead.

Folks, we, too, must face the decision of whom to believe almost every day. For example, it's a phenomenal act of trust to marry someone, and really believe them when they say: "For better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part." Can you imagine that people actually believe that? Teenagers are asked to believe their parents that studying and choosing good friends will make them happy, even though they hear other voices say: "Do what feels good: sex, drugs and alcohol is the road to happiness." Who do you believe? Married couples have to believe the Church when she says that contraception, tying your tubes, and a vasectomy are all wrong; even though society says, "You shouldn't have more than 1.5 children!" Who do you believe? Young people must believe God who invites them to be a priest or a sister, even though sometimes their own families say that you cannot be happy without a job, money and family. Who do you believe? You see, in such instances, it's not really a question of who's right and who's wrong. But rather, it's a matter of who we will believe.

During these 40 days of Lent, may God give us the grace to believe what He tells us, and ignore what Satan and the world tell us. The Skipper was right when he told Gilligan that not everyone can be right. Who do you believe is right?

Praised be Jesus Christ!