

**Quinquagesima Sunday**  
**February 15, 2015**  
**“New wine is poured into fresh wineskins.”**

- We all tend to get stuck in our ways
  - We all have ways of doing things that, when we encounter someone else doing it differently, we feel ill at ease
  - We may
    - Criticize
    - Get angry
    - Resist the change
  - For example, most people have their favorite particular pew that they sit in
    - Perhaps for many years
    - If a new person comes in and sits there before you get there, isn't it just a bit annoying?
  - This is what is happening as the Gospel today opens with the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees
    - The Pharisees are fasting at a prescribed time according to the Mosaic law
    - The disciples of Jesus aren't fasting
  - Jesus' reply indicates exactly the type of faith that we should have
    - Seriously, who would go to a wedding reception and refuse to partake in the food and drink?
    - That would be incredibly rude, and an insult to the bride and groom
    - The party is to celebrate the couple and to not participate is to disrespect them
  - With Jesus and the disciples, Jesus knows He won't be around long
    - His ministry was only 3 years
    - Every day with the Son of God would be a celebration
    - Not to acknowledge that by performing an act of mourning would be an insult to Him
    - However, after Jesus leaves, both temporarily on Good Friday and permanently from the earth at the Ascension, Fasting is appropriate
    - The Pharisees don't quite see this, since they don't see Jesus as the Son of God
  - Jesus addresses this too
    - When He talks about the old cloak and the new wine, He is referring to Himself
    - God, time-wise, is old... as old as it gets
    - He created time

- Jesus, as part of the Triune Godhead, is just as old
    - When we have a hole in our faith, we can't fill it with something new and trendy
    - We can't fill that hole with anything but God, or that hole will soon return
  - At the same time, Jesus is new... radically new
    - At no other time has the Son of God walked among human beings
    - Jesus offers us a transformation, to become something new
    - It is like being 'born again', because if we accept His teaching and example, we can and will be transformed!
- Lent
  - Lent is the time for us to get out of our rut
  - It's the time for us to examine what is working and what isn't in our faith life
    - This is a great Gospel to have as we end our short season of Lenten preparation
    - As we prepare to examine ourselves and where the holes in our faith lie, we can appropriately fast, pray and give alms with the right heart and spirit
    - The spirit of increasing the intensity of our relationship with God and Jesus Christ
    - This is repairing our cloak of faith with tried and true methods of spiritual repair
  - At the same time, we are preparing to receive the new... the Resurrection... which is the ultimate gift to mankind since it opened the gates of heaven for us
    - In order to do this, we must be like those new wineskins
    - We must be renewed vessels to receive the new wine of Christ's Resurrection at Easter
    - Lent helps us here too, because as we repair our old cloak of faith, we transform ourselves into those new vessels
    - But... only if we enter into Lent seriously and with the proper intent
  - It's not so important that 'one thing' to give up for Lent
    - What IS important is how we enter into this 6-week season of fasting, prayer and almsgiving
    - It is important because our intensity and heart that we enter the Lenten season with will be the indicator of how transformed we come out on the other side
  - There is only one question that each of us need to ask ourselves...
    - On Easter Sunday, will you be the Pharisee or the disciple?