

Members of Year 6 are preparing to be confirmed next Sunday by Bishop William. Younger children are preparing for their First Confession and First Holy Communion later in the spring. Adults, both young - and some not so young - are preparing to be received into the Church at Easter. This gives us all great hope. We are a growing church. We are also a very vibrant and multicultural church. But do not be deceived, we are also a very fragile church.

Today, Jesus goes into the desert. He goes without food and drink and he is tempted by the Devil. We, too, are entering a desert. We, too, are denying ourselves some of the pleasures and luxuries the world has to offer. We, too, will be tempted by the Devil.

Some people want the Church to be very strict and firm about everything, to teach the faith as it has always been taught, to be quite uncompromising about sexual morality and marriage discipline, and for the Mass to be celebrated as it has always been celebrated. But Jesus says, "*Man does not live on bread alone, but on **every** word that comes from the mouth of God.*"

Some people think that the Church is boring. They are fed up with bossy priests, bossy deacons and bossy catechists telling them what to do. 'Surely we don't really need all this religion because God is going to look after us anyway.' But Jesus says, "*You must not put the Lord your God to the test.*"

Some people just want to do their own thing, to form the Church in their own image, to create a religion that just bolsters their own ego and that gives them that nice, warm, feel-good factor.

But Jesus says, "*You must worship the Lord your God and serve him alone.*"

We are being tempted all the time. We live in a fast-moving and scary world. Everything is up for grabs and our only hope is Jesus.

So let's just recap how Jesus handles all this:

Listen and respond to **every** word that comes from the mouth of God.

Do not *put the Lord your God to the test.*

And....*worship the Lord your God and serve him alone.*

At the end of today's gospel it says: *Then the Devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.* In this life, it is unlikely that the Devil will ever entirely leave us, but what we can be sure of is that Jesus is with us and that his angels are looking after us, day by day, minute by minute.

Congratulations and prayers for those preparing for the sacraments and may we all have a wonderful Lent.

Fr Michael