

LENT 1 YrA - 2020

Gen. 2:7-9,3:1-7; Rom. 5:12-19; Matt. 4:1-11

“As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man’s obedience many will be made righteous.” Rom. 5:19

Each temptation offers insight into both God and the human condition. Jesus’ rejection of the temptations shows that **he will not put God to the test.**

Grounding himself on the word and authority of Scripture, Jesus rebukes the devil, **confident in God’s protection and faithfulness.**

As we start our journey through Lent, our Sunday readings call us to adopt the same confidence that Jesus had in the face of temptation: God’s word alone will suffice; **God’s promise of protection can be trusted; God alone is God.**

One of the real problems we all have is breaking bad habits. Ways of speaking, ways of thinking, ways of behaving that have become so ingrained into our personality that we are almost not conscious of them. And yet these need to change. We need the challenge and we need the motivation, perhaps even the sense of excitement that enables us to meet it.

Inspiration maybe from the saints. The Blessed Virgin. I commend **“33 Days to Morning Glory”** - consecration to Jesus through Mary. Read Introduction pp.4 & 5 if nothing else.

When they were called the first disciples left everything to follow Jesus. We are also called to do this - How? Not necessarily to have no possessions, but to ensure they don’t come before God and a Godly life, which, of course, they so often do.

Shift the focus - from self to God. Daily conversion. This is repentance - turning back to God, away from self. Getting back onto the right path on the journey.

We all think that, like Mary, we have said “yes” to God. After all we are here at Mass, aren’t we? We’ve been baptised, confirmed, received the Sacraments, been catechised, entered into a life of prayer, tried to do the right thing, the Christian thing. But I think that many of us, perhaps most of us in one way or another have only really said “yes, but ...” Look at Mary and see what her “yes” involved.

Once we have said a “yes” to God He stays with us (as does Mary)(there is much more to say about our Blessed Mother and her rôle in this, but there isn’t time today), never forcing Himself upon us, but until we say “no,” He is at our side in the power of His Holy Spirit, as is she, to help us grow in faith. However hard the struggle, however often we trip up or go astray, He is always there. And Mary loves us as a perfect mother, willing us to draw ever closer to her Son. This is her mission today and it is

personal to each and every Christian soul. We each have a unique purpose, given to us by our Father.

“God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. ... Therefore, **I will trust Him**, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away.” (St. John Henry Newman - “The Mission of my Life”)

So, what do we need to do?

How do we focus on God our Father? We turn to Him, spend time with Him, speak to Him, listen to Him. In other words we pray. **Prayer** is the most important preparation for this journey through Lent to Easter and it is what keeps us on the right track. It is the SatNav that navigates us through without going off-road.

There are lots of different ways of praying in Lent that really help us - daily prayers, going to Mass, praying before the Blessed Sacrament, **making our confession** (how have so many of us got out of the habit of regular confession?), saying the Rosary, reading the Bible, following a written programme, or course, of one sort or another. Do you need to make changes to do these things? Then take the plunge.

Fasting - do it for God, not for self. Only with prayer can we be sure we are doing it for God.

Almsgiving - works of charity. Being aware of others and their needs in all sorts of little ways. It takes us out of ourselves, helps us to be less selfish. Do it because God loves you, and He loves everyone else, too. It is what pleases the heart of Jesus most of all.

All these things purify our intentions, helping to make sure of why we do them.

Holy Mary is a wonderful example of all these things - she shows us what it means to offer oneself to God and she supports us with her constant assurance that those who say “yes” to God will be richly blessed.

So, there is a lot to do. Perhaps we need the courage to change our attitude to all sorts of things that we take for granted in our lives. We need to clear out the things that are less than good to make way for all the good things that God wants to give us.

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