

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR C

1. The number 40 is a sacred number in Scripture
 - a. A few of the many examples of periods marked by 40
 - b. the great flood Noah's time came about after 40 days and nights of rain
 - c. Israel wandered in the desert for 40 years
 - d. when Moses received the 10 Commandments he was on the mountain for 40 days
 - e. gospel of today in which Jesus goes into the desert and fasts for 40 days and nights
 - i. this period of 40 whether days or years seems to involve judgment and testing, a period of preparation time necessary to accomplish God's plan
2. the 40 days of Jesus in the desert has connections with the 40 years of Israel wandering in the desert
 - a. the desert is important place for testing and preparation to do God's work
 - i. in the desert people will discovering their weakness and dependence on God
 - b. in the desert both Israel and Jesus experienced temptations to abandon and doubt God
 - c. Israel often failed the tests, not just ask for food and water,
 - i. they complained: why did God lead us out here, just to die
 - ii. But God had mercy, he gives them manna, a bread from heaven
 - iii. He has Moses strike a rock from which water flows
3. Jesus goes into the desert and he is faced with his weakness
 - a. the first temptation is that of hunger
 - i. but is not just simply a hunger for food but probably also a hunger for certainty
 - ii. when Satan tells Jesus turned those stones into bread, he is asking Jesus: "do you really have the power of God to work a miracle"
 - iii. the temptation was quite subtle, doubt am I really the son of God, prove it
 - b. Jesus finds guidance in the Scriptures
 - i. Jesus responds one does not live on bread alone
 - ii. Reference to miracle of the manna in the desert
 - iii. Moses told Israel that this bread from heaven is a sign
 - iv. Life is not from bread alone but the word that comes from the mouth of God
 - v. Our fasting from food is way to identify with Jesus, remind ourselves that true life is not simply having enough food but is deeper and wider than food
 - vi. We need God's Word to truly survive
 - c. second temptation the Devil gives Jesus a vision of all the kingdoms of the world
 - i. and He says to Jesus I can give you these kingdoms if you but worship me
 1. Jesus knows he is sent to transform the world, to bring it to God
 2. the devil offers a quick way of changing the world: worship me, the king of the world, temptation to misuse power
 - ii. again Jesus turns to the Scriptures and replies that God alone is to be worshiped
 1. we identify with Jesus by humbling ourselves, got ashes on forehead
 2. more importantly in prayer we acknowledge only God can really change things whether our bad habits or evils of the world
 - d. final temptation has the devil turn Scripture against Jesus
 - i. he actually gets to the heart of the matter quoting Scripture saying if you are the son of God throw yourself down
 1. after all, the Scripture says if you are God's son, God will command the angels to guard you. they were themselves will support you lest you dash your foot against a stone
 - ii. Jesus responds is to the heart of the matter as well you shall not test the Lord your God
 - iii. He has come to do God's will in God's time, not to try to force his own agenda on God
4. the ultimate challenge of faith is to allow God to be God
 - a. as human beings by nature we are self-centered, we are center of the world
 - b. growing up is discovering that there are others in the world who are also important
 - c. this is a very difficult lesson to learn
 - i. constantly tempted to think the world ne revolves around me and my wishes

- d. putting God first is the ultimate sign of true maturity
 - e. Jesus invites us to identify with Him by patience and humility
 - i. God works in His own time and in His own ways
 - ii. Uses our gifts in ways we often cannot foresee
5. the temptations for Jesus were to raise doubts as to whether he was truly the son of God
- a. the devil continues that with us
 - b. he challenges are us are you really children of God, does God really love you
 - c. If God does not love me, what value is there in being gracious and kind to others
 - d. If I have only myself to depend on, then I need as much wealth, pleasure and power I can get
6. these forty days of Lent are God's time of testing and preparing us to live as His beloved children
- a. It is a time to get over the temptation of being little gods, demanding everything on our own terms, which leads to destruction and death
 - b. A time for us to turn to the word of God in the Scriptures, the sacraments but most importantly in the person of Jesus,
 - c. this is our chance to let go of distractions, doubts, the subtle temptations of life
 - d. This is our opportunity to pause in our life, to let God be Lord of our life
 - e. We can learn to accept our dependence and need for God
 - i. To discover in God alone can find what we really want and need in life