

The background of the entire image is a charcoal or pencil sketch of a landscape. At the top, three crosses are visible on a hill against a teal background. The rest of the image is a textured, brownish-grey sketch of a hillside or valley.

First Sunday of

LENT

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him...

Matthew 4:1-11

Lenten journey has begun, in the midst of a turn in the weather and all sorts of issues dominating our news and our minds.

Yes, there is a lot to fill our thoughts. Our days are busy and our spare time is precious.

The Gospel today calls us to a sense of proportion. In so many ways, the different things that fill our days may well really be choking us.

Three realities are examined in the Gospel of today:

Firstly there is physical fulfillment and security. No-one really wants to be hungry and insecure. We all look to good food and security of supply of same. Yet when this is offered to Christ in the desert, he refuses it. Something is more important than that...

The second reality is the reality of personal prestige and power. Again this is often something we crave. "Losing our stripes" is almost akin to physical pain and we enjoy the prestige that accompanies position in society and in rank. Enjoying the "power and the glory" is a strong human tendency. Yet again though, Christ suggests that this is not what he considers most important. Something is more important than that....

Life and death—maybe that is it. We could go without so much in terms of physical fulfillment and prestige, just to stay alive. After all, neither physical prowess nor prestige and power could save us if we fell from the parapet of the tallest building—so maybe that is it?—preserving life at all costs? Yet again, something is more important than that....

What is more important? This devil seems to have the right answers, so why does Christ not be more practical, realist, accommodating? This only means that they will have to cross swords again and again....

Crosses and swords, crosses and swords, now there is an idea. What about that? Watch this space...

QUESTIONS

- i. To turn a stone to bread would be a spectacular shortcut. What are the most tempting shortcuts for me?
- ii. Jesus is tempted "in the wilderness." In what wildernesses am I most vulnerable to temptation?
- iii. In the light of Jesus' experience, how should I react when I am feeling tempted?

LENT TEXT

Follow us on Twitter @OssoryDiocese for a simple thought each day during this Lenten journey. Have a timeline prompt you to pause each day to be reminded of our Lenten journey.

PROJECT

Write out an inventory of your weak points, chinks in your emotional, psychological or spiritual armour, which make you vulnerable to temptation. Then try to write out a corresponding list of Biblical thoughts or verses which might come to your help when you are struggling [Tip: if you are trying to locate a Biblical verse, type whatever words or phrases you can remember into the search line in Google. This very often gives the full verse, along with a reference, which will enable you to find the verse in your Bible].

