

Homily. 1st Sunday of Lent. Year. C. 5/6 March 2022.

The last 2 years have been broken for us in more ways than any of us could have imagined back in 2019. The Summer fires of 2020 were our first shocking experience of these times in which we live. This disaster was rapidly followed by the arrival of the Covid 19 global pandemic with rolling lockdowns, illness stalking our every breath and countless rules changing weekly, sometimes even daily. Sadly, despite all that we've done and more that must be done, the pandemic continues to impact our lives, in more than a few cases tragically and fatally.

As for the present, yet another climate disaster has hit us with deluging rain, flooding and all of the associated disruptions and dislocation this brings. Already our faith community is trying to help our local people who are most affected by flooding, an effort that is likely to span not days or weeks but many months. As these past few years have been broken compared to what we'd become used to, so they have broken many of us in our Church and the wider society. It's to these breaks and injuries that we must attend in the grace filled Season of Lent we've just begun.

Alone and hungry in the desert wilderness the Devil, Satan, the father of lies and falsehoods set out to misguide and break Jesus down just as His mission was beginning. Satan played the cards of personal comfort and wealth, of power over others and of gaining fame and glory for Himself.

At the core of all of this deception was the tempting invitation for Jesus to use His gifts and powers to serve Himself, not others as Gods desired. When we're stressed, confused and broken similar temptations ring out

within us. We notice that we begin focusing in on ourselves, our rights and privileges, our freedoms and desires, our wants above everything and everyone else. Displays of this sort of behaviour have been an all too frequent and distressing visitation upon us over these past 2 years.

Lent suggests another way, a better way for us. It gives us the image of Jesus under stress, assailed by some very tempting offers. His response models what we can choose, aided by His example, His grace and His Spirit living with us, for we must remember that we're never alone in this struggle. We can confront the tireless work spirit of the Tempter with the more powerful Spirit of Christ, unmasking deception and self-centredness with the light of our Lord's self giving love, for us and for all. We can tap deeply into this source of living grace in our prayers and here within our Parish faith communities life and witness. In a particular way the renewing and strengthening power of God is to be found in our Eucharist, offering to us right now the person, mercy and victory of Jesus Christ Himself.

As we embark together on this special season of grace, this fresh journey into life, let's keep Christ and His response clearly before our minds. In this way His word will come to live in our mouths and our hearts, healing our hurts, protecting us from shameful ways and in these times of chaos, saving us from from the worst that is within us and around us.