

Lent

22 2 15

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:
give us the grace to discipline ourselves,
in obedience to your Spirit;
and as you know our weakness,
so may we know your power to save.

Our text may be found in today's Psalm, Psalm 25 and verse 3:

**'Show me your ways, O Lord,
and teach me your paths.'**

Lent began last week on Ash Wednesday – 18th February. Lent has some six weeks still to run. Spiritually, Lent is a time for self-discipline, self-reflection, self-maintenance; a time for us to prepare again for Easter, for the Crucifixion and for the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Liturgically speaking, this is Year B so since Advent our principal gospel on a Sunday in church is Mark. John makes no mention of the time Jesus spent in the Wilderness. Matthew and Luke give parallel accounts of three of Jesus' temptations with the second and third temptations in reverse order. Mark is, as ever, beautifully brief, suitably succinct, in what he writes. I quote: **'And the Spirit**

be a time to turn off the TV or radio, time to go for a walk where we're unlikely to meet anyone to speak to. In silence, in reflection, we can think about who we are and what we are and where we want to be. In being alone, we can be aware that we are not alone: that the God the Holy Spirit is with us; that God the Father is speaking to us through the words and deeds of God the Son. And without distractions, we may well hear him speak to us !

Self-discipline. Lent is traditionally a time to give up things; but it could also be a time to do something extra. One year, I tried giving up making puns – that lasted just three days ! My two favourites are giving up either chocolate or alcohol. This year, I'm going to try something different. One thing extra thing we could do is to come to church on a Thursday, come to Holy Communion at 10.30, attend our Bible Study at 11.00, then stay on for the Bring and Share Lunch at midday.

One of the things that Jesus was doing by being in the Wilderness was trying to be closer to God by an effort of will – through self-discipline and through peace and quiet. So my question for you, for me, must be 'Are we up for it ?'

I have spoken in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Preached at the Eucharist

St Bartholomew's, Dinard

22nd February, 2015

