Driven by the Spirit into the Desert

When we think of Jesus being tempted, the images that usually come to our mind are the three temptations: in the desert, on the parapet of the temple, and on the high mountain. We recall how Satan tries to sweet-talk Jesus into using his power to change stones into loaves of bread and assuage his hunger, to throw himself down from the parapet of the temple while trusting that God’s angels will prevent him from being hurt, and to worship Satan in exchange for power over all the kingdoms of the world.

All these are in Matthew and in Luke. Mark’s account of the temptation, in contrast, is very short, giving practically no details and covering the whole event in just two verses.

Mark makes it clear that it is the Spirit who drives Jesus into the desert. Jesus is in the desert not by chance or because of some unforeseen circumstance. Neither is it by the work of some evil spirit. God is in charge of what is happening to Jesus; the Spirit drives Jesus to the desert for the greatest good that could be hoped for.

Jesus is tempted after his baptism (cf Mk 1:9-11). After being baptised by John, Jesus sees the heavens torn open. Like a dove, the Spirit descends on Jesus, and the Father’s voice comes from the heavens, ‘You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.’

Immediately after this dramatic event, Jesus is driven by the Spirit out into the desert. Note that it is to the desert that Jesus goes. Not to the synagogue. Not to the old neighbourhood. Not to Joseph’s carpentry shop. The result of Jesus' baptism is not to return to the old and the familiar, but to go out to the new and the unknown.

In the desert the Israelites became God’s people by covenant. En route to the Promised Land, they spent 40 reluctant years, learning of the desert’s hardship and wisdom, realising that only God could be their security and guide, and discovering that God alone could be their final food and water. In the course of the people’s history, whenever their love and faithfulness to God grew cold, the prophets would suggest their return to the desert to rediscover their identity, their vocation, and their mission as a way of reawakening their faith and strengthening their covenant relationship with God.

In the desert that is God’s university, Jesus spends 40 days of radical dependence, his bread not the result of his own power but of his feeding on the will of the One who sent him. Jesus thus becomes one of us in vulnerability to sin and the wiles of Satan, yet without succumbing to sin and Satan’s power.

Only after his desert struggle does Jesus forge ahead into the ministry of proclaiming the good news.

Parish BBQ

Parishioners are invited to a Parish BBQ on 15 March after 9:30am Mass. Cost $7.50 includes morning tea, coffee, lunch, fruit juice and wine! Please pay at the parish office before 13 March for catering purposes. The BBQ will be held at the Muldoon Room and canteen. All welcome!
Our Wilderness

The ‘Good News’ was the completion of the promise made by God to Noah and to the people of Israel in the person of Jesus, the Messiah. God made a covenant with Noah and remained faithful to that covenant even though the people were unfaithful. To begin his ministry Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit, so that he could understand his mission through reflection, prayer and the struggle against Satan. During the season of Lent we are invited to the ‘wilderness’ by the Spirit, so that we too can be strengthened through our prayer, reflection and struggle against Satan who tempts us in different ways and draws us away from God.

Stop to Pray

‘Stop, look, and listen’ is what you do at a railroad crossing. Prayer is like a railroad crossing. God is like a great train crossing the tracks of your life. You want to get run over by this train! So here is how you put yourself on the tracks in front of God.

First, STOP! Stop doing everything else you are doing. Stop worrying about anything else in the whole world except your prayer to God right now. Stop being Martha; if you don’t, you cannot be Mary (see Lk 10:38-41). You cannot sit at the Lord’s feet while you are running around on your own feet. You cannot hear him if you are frothing at the mouth and fussing at the fingers. You cannot LOOK unless you first STOP; you cannot practice the presence of God if you are just too busy for him.

This is true even of your kids and your parents: they need your time more than they need anything else, for that is your life - your lifetime. Time is a test of love, and the beloved (or the not-beloved) always knows it. God certainly knows it.

You cannot ‘do God’ by halves. God - the real God as distinct from some convenient man-made idea - is too big to fit into some little side slot in your mind while you are doing something else that is more important to you. He is not back-ground music.

This first step, STOP, is in itself the easiest one. But you will probably find it the hardest if you are a typically modern person: busy, active, outgoing. Most of us are like rolling stones: we have too much momentum to slow down. If you do find this hard, remember that it is only hard to you; in itself it is easy. And remember that it is necessary: you have to stop even to smell the roses; all the more necessary to stop to talk to God!

(continued next week)

Peter Kreeft PhD

Never too Late

During this time Catholics are encouraged to go to Confession, particularly if they haven't been in a long time. Ann Casey’s story helps us to embrace absolution after years of penitential neglect. May this personal journey encourage each of us that it is never too late to return to the confessional.

‘Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been ?? Words known even before my First Communion rush back in this quiet fearful sanctuary and stop dead in my throat. How do I even begin to explain the 25 years since my last confession coupled with my sins of absence from Mass?

‘The attempts to rationalise become feeble. My soul’s eyes search them, stripping my banal and petty excuses. I am left with the cloak I hide in fraying all its threads.

‘I could easily bolt to the foolish refuge of the outside world. Yet, the very act of confession means facing what is in our secret hearts as well as admitting the cringing embarrassment of exposing and voicing aloud our sins.

‘I suppose that is the real difficulty; our attempts to be humble when our whole being screams self-sufficient independ-ence and our pride shouts dependency on no one. Ah, but humility requests from God the ego, a high price for our stilled and penitent heart.

Would he, God, the recipient of so much supplication, welcome back the prodigal? Would there at least be the solace for a wandering soul’s need to be allowed to come home again?

‘My still small voice finally found the courage to confess. The words unstuck in my throat. How do I even begin to explain the 25 years since my last confession coupled with my sins of absence from Mass?

‘My tiny voice finally found the courage to confess. The words unstuck in my throat. How do I even begin to explain the 25 years since my last confession coupled with my sins of absence from Mass?

‘God gives us stepping-stones to ease our seeking amidst our tumbles down and gives always what we need, not what we want.’

God’s Word Fr Reuben Tellis

Catholic Online
Lenten Adoration

Sit in the presence of our Lord and breathe. In the midst of our fast paced lives we all need to take some time out from the hustle and bustle of daily life and spend some quiet time with our Lord. Sitting with our Saviour for an hour of quiet prayer, devotion, and contemplation, is an hour well spent. Adoration provides that special, intimate time with our Lord and lets us refresh, renew, and recharge with the Holy Spirit.

Adoration will be held in our Prayer Room on each Saturday during Lent from 9am Mass through to Benediction at 5:30pm.

Project Compassion

Lent is a valuable time for examining our direction, refocusing our priorities, and making sure that God is at the centre of our lives. We need this time of Lent each year to open ourselves to being captured anew by the love of God - and to find ways for the love we have received to flow through us to others.

In Lent we pay special attention to the three traditional practices of almsgiving, prayer and fasting - but, as the Gospel cautions, we do them ‘not to attract notice’. The Gospel encourages us to be people of joy and hope, advice that is echoed in Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation, ‘The Joy of the Gospel’ With a tenderness which never disappoints, but is always capable of restoring our joy, God makes it possible for us to lift up our heads and to start anew.’

In Australia, Project compassion has become part of the Church’s Lenten practice. It is a key way to bring joy, hope and food for life to those in need.

Lenten Suggestions

♦ Start your day with 10 minutes in God’s presence through prayer, reflection or meditation.
♦ Tell family members you will be specially praying for them.
♦ Fast from TV, computer or other technical devices you would usually use as part of your leisure time.
♦ Support good works such as Project Compassion, St Vincent de Paul and Catholic Mission.

Please Note

Catholic Women’s League Meeting

World Day of Prayer
Australian Church Women are celebrating the World Day of Prayer on 6 March at 10am in the Parish Centre. All welcome!

Bishop Comensoli’s Lenten Message
Please find copies of the Bishop’s Lenten Message on the foyer tables. The message may be viewed on Youtube (Bishop Peter Comensoli Lenten Message 2015).

Teresa of Avila for Beginners
A Retreat lead by Fr Aloysius Rego OCD at Mt Carmel Retreat Centre 247 St Andrews Road Varroville 27 February-1 March. Cost @$220. Enq: 88795 3400.

Spirituality in the Pub
Join the conversation Tuesday 3 March at the Grange Hotel Function Room Cnr Renwick St and Pacific Hwy Wyoming 7:30pm. Enq: 4328 2596.

Where Do You Belong?
Join author Hugh Mackay Wednesday 4 March 7-30pm at Prouille Catholic School 5 Water St Wahroonga. Enq: 9489 3221.

Torah Study for Christians
Rabbi Krebs will participate as a panelist in an Abrahamic Dialogue Wednesday 18 March at Brigidine College Mona Vale Rd St Ives 6:30pm. Enquiries 0417 438 736 or teresa.pirola@dbb.org.au

I Believe in One God Seminar
Understanding our Profession of Faith facilitated by David Patterson Tuesday 24 March 6pm Caroline Chisholm Centre 423 Pennant Hills Road Pennant Hills. Enq: 9847 0448 or registrations@dbb.org.au

Seasons for Growth Companion
Training for the Seasons for Growth Adult Program as a Companion is on offer at the Caroline Chisholm Centre Tuesday 10 and Wednesday 11 March from 8:30am-4pm. Cost $300 includes manual. Enquiries: 9847 0508 or trish.mckenzie@dbb.org.au Bookings: www.goodgrief.org.au/training
Serving the Catholic Community of The Entrance and extending the Kingdom of God

**THE ENTRANCE PARISH**

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**PROPERTY MANAGER**  Michael de la Motte  
**Tel**  4334 7600 (BH)  
**GIFT CENTRE**  
**Sunday**  9:00am - 9:30am & 10:30am - 11:00am  
**Tuesday-Friday**  9:30am - 1:30pm  
**Tel/Fax**  4332 5997

**OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**Tel**  4332 5594  
**ST PETER’S CATHOLIC COLLEGE**  
**Tel**  4351 2344

**Mass & Devotions in Ordinary Time**

**Sunday Masses**  Saturday Vigil 6:00pm Sunday 8:00am & 9:30am  
**Weekday Masses**  Monday - Thursday 9:00am Friday 11:45am Saturday 9:00am  
**Sacrament of Reconciliation**  Saturday 9:30am & 5:00pm

**1st Sunday of Lent**

- **Today’s Readings:**  
  Genesis 9:8-15  
  Mark 1:12-15

- **Entrance Antiphon:**  
  When he calls on me, I will answer him; I will deliver him and give him glory, I will grant him length of days.

- **Responsorial Psalm:**  
  Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant.

**Keep Us In Your Prayers**

**Recently Deceased:**  Michael Comensoli (Bishop’s father), Eamon Egan, Marie Davis, Bernard Bond, Fr Warren Wade, William Hall, Gabriele Ramondo, Helene Gerada, Vincent Curtis, John Burke.  
**Funeral:**  The funeral of Eamon Egan was held during the week. Please pray for Eamon and his family.  
**Anniversaries:**  Maria Fernandez, Michael & Trevor Greenhalgh, Bruce Hore, Olive & Joseph Wright, Jim Rosewarne, Kathleen Hack.  
**Remembrances:**  Bruce Parry, Beryl White, Nora O’Leary, Jean Workman, Col McLaurin, Dorothy Cribb, Gloria Shackleton, Jean Beaton, Bruce Evers, Mary & Joe Pace, Maurice Cransome, Alice Minogue and the Holy Souls in Purgatory.  
**Families:**  Bouchet, Cole, Attard.

**Sick:**  Roger & Grant Thomas, Fay Gallagher, Cecil Bastick, Fr Vince Pedemont, Margaret Pizzuto, Sr Margaret Bubb, Stan Johnson, Mary Suckling, Taylor Grady, Michael Sullivan, Gaye Lyk, Carol Jones, John Verhoeven Snr, Mary Camilleri, Julie Webb, Lyn Moon, Patricia O’Brien, Bernard Bond, Dorothy Patterson, Brian Crowe, Mary Hughes, Heather Wise, Pat O’Hara, Antoinette Grech, Bernie Lowe, Sue Batten, Sue MacSween, Elaine Keyte, Lisa Hennessey, Hayley Hartas, Brian & Valerie Staggs, Zoe Kidd, Jenny Carter, Linda Read, Christopher Forster, Grace Miller, Delma Clarke, Debbie Simonds, Jenny Rist.  
**Welcome Newly Baptised:**  Daphne Anne Wray.

**GIFT CENTRE**

- **Everyone wants to live long, but no one wants to be old...**  
- **No one likes the stifling heat but who wants the bitter cold?**  
- **Most people want to be happy, yet few are seen with a grin...**  
- **Everyone wants salvation as long as they still can sin...**

We have great books for meditation and reflection as well as reading material for Lent. Also gifts for Baptisms, Weddings and all the Sacraments. Come in for a browse.  
You’ll find us behind the Church carpark, corner of Ashton and Copnor Avenues.

**Open:**  
Sunday 9am-9:30am & 10:30-11am  
Tuesday-Friday 9:30am-1:30pm  
**Phone/Fax**  4332 5997

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**DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY**

**Liturgy of the Hours**  Saturday 8:40am  
**Rosary**  Monday-Thursday 8:35am Friday 11:20am Saturday 9:30am  
**Cenacle**  Wednesday 9:30am  
**Christian Meditation Group**  Friday 10:30am Muldoon Room

**Weekdays Cycle I**

- **Gospel Acclamation:**  
  Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!  
  No one lives on bread alone, But on every word that comes from the mouth of God.  
  Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

- **Communion Antiphon:**  
  One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

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**Pearly Gates**

We have great books for meditation and reflection as well as reading material for Lent. Also gifts for Baptisms, Weddings and all the Sacraments. Come in for a browse.

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