

First Sunday of Lent

February 21, 2021

Here we are on the First Sunday of Lent. The Spirit of God drove Jesus out to the desert for 40 days. The number 40 is used frequently in the story of Jesus. In the old testament the Hebrew people wandered in the desert for 40 years. And with Noah, in Genesis 7:12 “And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights.” 40 hours devotion is an old Catholic ritual.

So, the number 40 suggests a time of testing, or a time of cleansing/ Or as in today’s gospel a time of temptation.

I suggest we think of it as a time of retreat. I know that probably you nor I can afford a 40-day retreat, but I don’t think we should pass up this opportunity to do some kind of “retreat”. The benefit of a retreat is that one can get away. While away from ordinary routine we can be less distracted by the ordinary responsibilities of life. While away, there is a kind of emptying of the mind. In a reflection I wrote a couple of weekends ago, I spoke of the difference between Curing and Healing. To cure is to “get better”, to fix. For example, if you break a leg or arm, that can be cured. But it will never feel the same. In the winter months or if it is bumped, it will bring back the memory of the event, and we are not “as good as new”. In my earlier reflection I spoke of healing as a deeper event, a hope to bring the body, mind and heart to a type of wholeness, to be “as good as new”. These 40 Days of Lent bring us a challenge to step away, perhaps to dedicate a space in your home, a time “away” so that you and I can heal from the broken hurts, or broken dreams that may need care. Let us give that some consideration.