

## Lent 1C

*One day a little boy was in the market eyeing up a rather tempting display of apples on the fruit stall. Thinking the worse, the stall owner yelled: 'Hey boy, are you trying to pinch my apples. 'Oh no,' said the boy, 'I'm trying not to'.*

We're not tempted because we're bad but because, chastened by original sin, we're prone to find forbidden things attractive. Temptation itself is not a sin. Even though Jesus was not contaminated by the sin of our first parents, like we are, He willingly took on board the whole gambit of our fallen state which included temptation. The gospel today bears this out.

After 40 days fasting Jesus was vulnerable. As with Jesus the tempter knows only too well where we're weakest - where we're most likely to fall. We too need to know our 'Achilles heel' so as not to be caught off guard. It's hardly wise, for instance, to take on a job managing a pub if our drinking is already out of control.

This first temptation is about satisfying the desires of the body. Some people, for instance, are hooked on food and they seem to 'live to eat' rather than 'eat to live. That's why fasting is important. Others may have a weakness for shopping where their spending is out of control even though the money could be used far more sensibly. Others can't control their tongue. The list doesn't end here. Lent is an opportune time for confronting these demons.

The aim of the second temptation is for Jesus, the miracle worker, to dazzle the crowd by throwing Himself off the parapet of the temple using the angels as a safety net. With some daring stunts like this the people might acclaim Him as a superman, in the hope that it would go to His head and divert his attention away from the less attractive option of laying down his life on the Cross. Jesus, however, was always many steps ahead of his rival and he knew His Father's Will.

Do we sometimes put on a show for people giving the false impression that 'all is sweetness and light' whereas, we know deep down it is not. Taking up our Cross with Jesus will mean that we stop playing games and engage with the truth about ourselves, no matter how unpalatable that may be.

The third temptation is where the Tempter offers Jesus all the Kingdoms of the world. Here he is exploiting our weakness for power over others which is often accompanied by pride in possessions. Jesus often warned the apostles against jockeying for positions of power. He told them to take the lowest place. Jesus didn't fall for this temptation because He know His Kingdom was not of this world. Let us not become bogged down in the allurements of this world either.

*Our prayer and fasting during Lent will help us to see through, and see off, the subtle temptations of the Evil one. Will-power alone is not enough. Jesus, Himself, tells us: "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak – pray not to be put to the test"*