

## 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 steal my apples. 'Oh no,' said the boy, 'I'm trying not to'.*

We're not tempted because we're bad but susceptible as we are to the effects of original sin, we're prone to find forbidden things attractive. Temptation itself is not a sin. Even though Jesus was not stained 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 our weak spots - where we're most likely to fall. We too need to know our 'Achilles heel' so as not to be caught off guard.

This first temptation is about satisfying the desires of the flesh. Eating too much comes to mind. Some 'live to eat', instead of 'eating 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 gaze away from the less attractive option of laying down his life on the Cross. They say even the Devil can quote scripture which he does in this case. Some preachers also cherry-pick quotations of Scripture usually out of context to present a distorted image of Jesus as a superman who, with a wave of

his hand will iron out all the ruffles of your life - an abricadabra man. This is the very image of Himself which Jesus was loathe to project. After certain miracles, He often made a quick exit into the hills to be by himself? It is in the very messiness of life which we find Jesus. He is concerned with the transformation of the inner man or woman to whom he gives inner strength inner peace and inner power to counter temptation. Jesus, however, was always many steps ahead of his rival because he knew His Father's Will only too well.

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 knew His Kingdom was not of this world. Let us not become too captivated by the allurements of this world either.

*Our prayer and fasting during Lent will help us to see through the subtle temptations of the Evil one. Will-power alone is not enough. "Pray not to be put to the test. The spirit may be willing but the flesh is weak".*