

Motivation for 01/03/20 (First Sunday of Lent)

Matthew 4: 1-11

This week's Gospel marks the first Sunday of Lent, the six weeks of spiritual preparation for the events of the Easter Triduum - when we celebrate God's victory over sin and death, when Christ restored us to relationship with God through his 'obedience' to the Father, as St Paul writes in this Sunday's second reading (Rm 5:12-19).

You may have heard this passage a hundred times, but prepare yourself to be taken aback by it. Allow it to shed fresh light on your life and your relationship with the Lord. And let it instruct you for your own spiritual journey this Lent.

Don't let the powerful visual narrative fool you into taking this story at face value and seeing it as one of fierce single combat between Jesus and the Devil.

The battle may have been fierce but Jesus is not alone. He is led into the desert just after his baptism in the Jordan, where he has been filled with the Holy Spirit and recognised as Beloved Son of the Heavenly Father to whom he lives his whole life in obedience. He combats the devil with words from Scripture that he has studied and memorised and that he allows to guide him, despite the enticing appearances of worldly power and goods.

Are you being led by the Spirit this Lent, or your own self will?

Are you marching into the desert to face the devil on your own strength, or are you making sure to be sustained by Scripture?

Are you submitting to the Lord's instruction or are you too attached to your own independence?

Let this Scripture challenge you, unnerve you, and make you pray for God's mercy. Thank God for the life and freedom his Word has given you.