

DESERT TIME

The Season of Lent is a time of prayerful reflection and particular actions. It is a 'desert' time. It is a time of 'turning around' or repenting as we are renewed in our baptismal dignity under God's grace. The forty days Lenten journey (cf. the wandering of the Chosen People in the desert for 40 years and Jesus's 40 days in the desert) is preparatory to the Holy Week-Easter-Pentecost highpoint of the Church's year. If we sincerely respond to this graced time we will be challenged or tempted, as was Jesus (today's Gospel). Temptations are often but not always subtle. They seek to deceive as they appeal or entice. Consider for Jesus: being hungry, why not turn stones into bread (first temptation); if he is the Messiah, should he not manifest his political power as the people were expecting (second temptation); if the Son of God, should he not trust the Father to protect him (third temptation). He rejects each temptation asserting that his power is not self-serving but serving of others, not an imposed leadership but an invitation to partake of the reign of God, not to test but to trust God. **The lure of possessions, power and prestige underpin the temptations of Jesus, as they do for us too.** *"Son of God though he is and "special" beyond all other human beings in this sense, he will not be exempt from treading the ordinary path of human life"* (Brendan Byrne SJ). **In Lent the Church calls us to 'prayer, fasting and almsgiving'.** Prayer is inclusive of liturgical prayer, which we gather for now, as well as various forms of personal prayer and reflection. Fasting is about not partaking so as to better appreciate. Almsgiving is support for those in need, mindful that it is Jesus who presents in them. To assist with personal or group reflection, we have some copies of **Michael McGirr's "All I Have Is Yours"** available in the foyer. Parishioner **Julie Long (0435 657 345)** invites parishioners to meet in the church meeting room to reflect and pray before the Sat 6pm Mass. Besides what you decide to fast from or conversely do, **the Church requires fasting from one meal per day (for those 18 to 60) and abstinence from meat (for those 14 and over) on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday;** all the other Fridays of the year are Days of Penance (when we are required to fast or pray or undertake charitable acts as reparation). **The theme of this year's Project Compassion is "Lives change when we all give 100%".** The PC appeal is conducted by Caritas Australia, the Catholic Agency for international aid and development, www.caritas.org.au. You can support the work of Caritas via the Qkr app under 'ACG Special Collections'. **I invite someone from each household to collect a Project Compassion box or set of envelopes from the foyer.**