

MARCH 6, 2022
1st Sunday of Lent
Luke 4: 1-13

“FORTY DAYS WITH THE LORD.”

“Once four priests were spending a couple of days at a cabin. In the evening they decided to tell each other their biggest temptation. The first priest said, ‘Well, it’s kind of embarrassing, but my big temptation is gluttony.’ ‘My temptation is worse,’ said the second priest. ‘It’s gambling.’ ‘Mine is worse still,’ said the third priest. ‘I sometimes can’t control the urge to drink. The fourth priest was quiet. ‘Brothers, I hate to say this,’ he said, ‘but my temptation is worst of all. I love to gossip – and if you guys will excuse me, I’d like to make a few phone calls!’”¹

My brothers and sisters, we are now on the Season of Lent, and this is a 40-day journey with the Lord. Why forty? In the bible, we can see a lot of events referring to this number forty. Noah was on the ark and rained for forty days. Elijah walked in the desert for forty days. Moses spent forty days on Mt. Sinai. The Hebrews roamed in the desert for forty years after they were delivered by God from Egypt. “So, what’s so special about forty? Forty is a biblical length of time that represents the period of purification before a momentous change. After the forty days of flood, mankind was purified, ready to start anew. After forty days on Mt. Sinai, Moses was purified, ready to receive the holiness code. He descended the mountain with the tablets of the Ten Commandments and a sure way for the Hebrews to live as God’s people. Forty years later, their children and grandchildren would enter the Promised Land as people who had faith in God, not like their parents and grandparents whose faith wavered. After forty days in the desert, Elijah was empowered to renew God’s people. After forty days in the desert, Jesus was strengthened to do battle with the Tempter. What happened during those forty days that

¹ stories4homilies.blogspot.com

Jesus was in the desert? Through prayer and fasting, Jesus was fortified to do the will of the Father. He was strengthened to wage war against evil. The goals of His forty days were first to obey the Father and do all that was true and good and beautiful and second to bring His People out of darkness into the light. After those forty days in the desert, after defeating the Tempter, Jesus began His public ministry, His public life.”²

How about us, what will happen to us if we are determined Christians to do our forty days of Lent? We are prepared, enriched, and fortified to obey our God, and have the strength to join the war against the evil one. Lent is about God, about loving, serving, and obeying Him. Lent is about our brothers and sisters, the millions of people who are suffering, in the darkness of their lives, the millions of people who need hope and love, care and concern, the millions of people who are in the refugee camps because of war and conflict, who need food, shelter and security. The gospel is teaching us all these things. It is not about gratifying our desire for power and material wealth or even replacing God with us being the gods and give way to greed, distraction of innocent people for selfish gain and destroying what God created. My brothers and sisters, life is and always about God not ourselves. We are challenged not to listen to the world that tells us to seek success, power and money but rather listen to God who tells us to seek humility, service, and love. This season of Lent, we are called for “forty days to prepare for the battle of our lives. Forty days to come closer to God. Forty days to be attuned to His guidance. Forty days to grow stronger in our faith. Forty days to get a better control of ourselves. Forty days to join the Lord in the victory of life over death. Forty days to help others in their suffering and hopelessness. As the saying goes: The happiest people may not have the best, but they make the best of everything. Let us enjoy the coffee, not complain about the cup. Let us live simply, love generously, forgive until it hurts, care

² www.dailyscripture.net

deeply, speak kindly, and live uprightly.”³ My dear brothers and sisters may the forty days with Lord bring us blessings and graces and strengthening us to be closer to God and pray that we may not fall into temptations.

Let this be our prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, you are tempted in the desert three times and defeated the evil one because of your persevering love, humility and relying on your Father's will. Fill us with the same spirit and courage to face all temptations this forty days of Lent and throughout our lives. May we renounce anything that is evil and contrary to your goodness and love. Amen."

³ ibid