

Lent 1 Year B 2018

This globe is a model or picture of the Earth that we are familiar with but you can't see it like this from Sangley Road. You have to imagine that you are seeing it from outer space. I remember when astronauts first started going into space and sending back pictures of the blue planet looking like this. All of them were affected by it. It gave them a different perspective of life on earth because they 'd stepped away from it. They saw it from the outside and changed their lives accordingly.

Well Jesus spent 30 years in and around Nazareth and today we hear that he felt driven into the wilderness from where he could look back in on life with a different perspective. There he reflected on life and his life in particular, separated as he was from all his everyday and familiar comforts, even regular meals.

From the wilderness he looks back and sees things as they really are and he gets in touch with the notion of sacrifice (and temptation). This will define his mission and our calling. Through purification he gains the strength and resolve that he will need to take on that personal sacrifice and he returns with his priorities clearly set.

Straightaway he tells people: The time has come. The kingdom is coming. All must repent, change course and set real priorities in life.

And so in Lent we try to head off towards the wilderness too, leaving something behind-not just bad habits but some good things too, to return to them later. We try to get in touch with the notion of sacrifice. This will enable us at Easter to draw close alongside Jesus as the liturgy and the narrative lead us through his personal journey of sacrifice. It is a journey that defines both humanity and divinity-yes it does!

So in lent, like an astronaut in space or Jesus in the desert, we can see more clearly what our priorities should be and how we need to change.

And in lent we try to enter the experience of sacrifice which defined Christ's life and will ultimately define ours too.

It is a personal calling but one that we all share so we are offering you two things to help:

a) A Lenten Promise Card that represents a challenge to make some sacrifice-this year a sacrifice of some time, some quality time that you will give up for someone else, perhaps some quality time that you will give to someone in the family (as opposed to just being in the same room with them while you're on the phone or watching TV). It might be time you give to a neighbour who lives alone or a relative or friend who would just love to hear from you. Try if you can to name someone whom you will give time to, but in any case sign the promise card and place it in the basket when it comes round in a minute. All the cards will be hung on our Lenten Cross afterwards.

b) The other thing is this Prayer Journal. This is for you to take away and each Sunday to jot down a few thoughts that come to you from the Sunday Gospel-phrases, words, symbols, pictures, whatever.

You will find that it can really help you to develop your prayer and to hear what God is dying to tell you. There is a page for each Sunday right up to Palm Sunday. No need to bring the journal to church, obviously, it is for you to have at home and scribble in when the time is right.