

## Homily 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Lent Year C 2022

Jesus had just been baptised and heard God, his Father, call him *his beloved Son* and experienced the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. At such great news, we would want to invite people out to celebrate. Jesus is different, he goes into the desert seeking quiet simplicity to reflect on what his Father wanted him to do. He comes to realise that the task ahead will be far from easy and that he will need help from his Father and the Holy Spirit in order to fulfil his mission.

People have been known to become so involved in a project – a painting – a poem or essay – a technical enterprise – that they are completely unaware of hunger or anything else – they are totally absorbed in the project. Could it be that Jesus was so focused on the Father and the Holy Spirit that he did not notice his hunger?

We experience many hungers in life but if, as Jesus suggests, we focus on the Word of God, on Jesus Christ, the pull of those human hungers will diminish radically as Jesus takes centre place in our lives!

The devil is crafty. He knows that one of the most difficult challenges in life is the desire for control. After all we can do great good, even very great good, when we are in control. Not being in control leaves us vulnerable, unprepared and weak – a difficult feeling because of the uncertainty. Jesus discovered in the desert that he could only fulfil his mission if he placed his complete trust in the Father; something people often say they do but don't.

Lent is the time to learn to let go of control!!

It is always easy to trust God when our prayers are answered, particularly when in prayer for others. It is a different matter when the prayers are not answered and one tragedy follows another for good and faithful people. The real test of trust for Jesus came later in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the Cross when he felt abandoned by his Father.

**Pope Francis on “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?”** *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”* However, God did not forsake His people in Egypt. He heard their cry in bondage and delivered them. Chased by Pharaoh's army God did not forsake the Israelites but opened the sea and delivered them. Nebuchadnezzar sent three Hebrews into a fiery furnace because they would not pay him homage. God did not forsake them but delivered them from the fire. Darius sent Daniel to a den of lions. God did not forsake Daniel but delivered him. Yet, when the Son of God was dying on a cross, God lets him die alone and allowed Him to cry out, *“Why have you forsaken me?”*

Sin separates people from God and demands penalties to be paid. Jesus committed no sin yet he experienced separation but still kept faith calling God His own: *“My God, my God...”* He followed an everyday habit by turning to God in prayer. He neither forsook God nor his ways, despite experiencing himself as God's abandoned!