

Sunday 18th February 2024

The First Sunday of Lent

Today's Gospel reading:



In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

In today's Gospel, we hear about Jesus's baptism by his cousin, John, in the river Jordan. Is there any part of this story which reminds you of last week's Gospel reading? Think about what Jesus and those around him heard.

At his Baptism, God confirmed who Jesus was, but Jesus needed time and space to reflect on his ministry and just how he should go about it.

It was so important for Jesus to prepare, before choosing his disciples and beginning to teach people about his kingdom, that he wanted to make sure there weren't any distractions. He went into the wilderness to spend some time alone with God and to prepare himself - just Jesus and God talking to each other. No food. No drink. No friends. No distractions.

The Holy season of Lent began last Wednesday, Ash Wednesday.

Lent is a time when we, too, can try and spend time with God – as far as possible without distractions. This is why many people give something up during Lent. Like Jesus, we need to find space and time and take nothing with us, so that we can open up our hearts to God. It's not easy, but can you give it a try?

Even Jesus found that he was tempted in various ways to take the wrong route – to go the way of celebrity, of testing God and of the “quick fix”. Jesus knew that, ultimately, he had to choose the way of love, the way of service... putting others’ needs before his own and always serving God. St Mark tells us that, when things got difficult, angels came to help him. Angels will come and help us too!

My Plan for Lent this Year

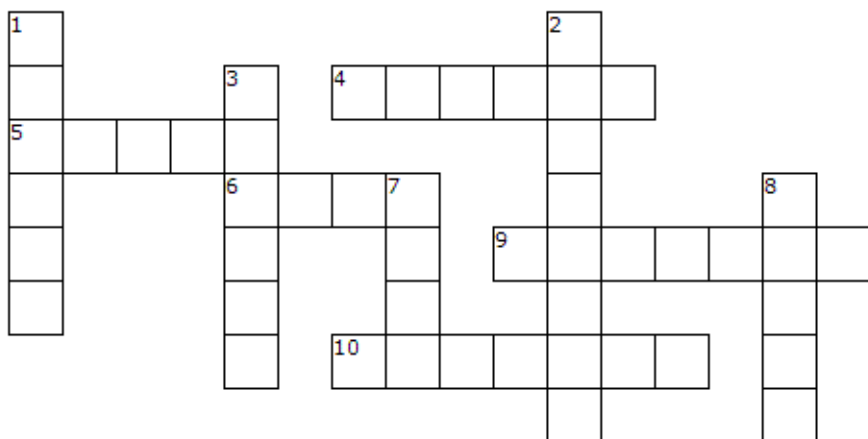
<p>Lent is a time when we are called to refocus and live more simply while striving to be closer to God, and to live more like Jesus taught us to live our lives. Lent includes a focus on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving/service.</p> <p>Make a plan for at least one thing you will do during Lent this year for each focus area of the Lenten season.</p>	<p>Prayer:</p>
<p>Almsgiving / Service:</p>	<p>Fasting:</p>

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Carrying the Message

"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" Mark 1:15 (NIV)

Based on Mark 1:9-15 (NIV)



ACROSS

4. Jesus was baptized in the _____ River. (vs.9)
5. Jesus was tempted by _____. (vs.13)
6. Jesus proclaimed the _____ news of God. (vs.14)
9. Jesus said, "The _____ of God is near." (vs.15)
10. Jesus asked people to repent and _____. (vs.15)

DOWN

1. The Spirit led Jesus into the _____. (vs.12)
2. Jesus was _____ by John. (vs.9)
3. Jesus was tended to by _____. (vs.13)
7. The Spirit descended on Jesus like a _____. (vs.10)
8. Jesus was in the desert for _____ days. (vs.13)

JORDAN
BELIEVE

KINGDOM
DESERT

FORTY
SATAN

DOVE
BAPTIZED

ANGELS
GOOD

