



DARE TO DREAM

Lent Week 1 - The Time has Come

Week beginning 21st February 2021

Before you begin the prayer...

The season of Lent is one of metanoia, of transformation and of a movement towards new life. It is the journey we take which leads from where we are to somewhere new, from being trapped or enslaved to new life. When we talk about metanoia, the journey we are taking is one that may lead us to a change of heart, of mind, self or way of life. As a diocese we are being invited to take such a journey, to allow ourselves to be transformed, not only personally but communally. If our diocese is to flourish we will need to make the journey, a journey that will not be easy but one that does have the potential to be rich and rewarding. As it does each year, the Lenten journey begins with an invitation to enter the desert with Jesus.

It might feel that, with all that the past year has given us, we are not entering the desert, but are already in the desert, parched, fearful of the unknown, weary and just a little lost. It is well-known that when we find ourselves feeling like this it is much easier to fall foul of temptation. Jesus was no exception. He faced temptation. He struggled and he overcame. What can we learn from the experience?

In our efforts to move forward as a diocese, there will be a need to overcome temptations, not just three but possibly many, beginning with the temptation to put our head in the sand and imagine that someone, somewhere will sort it all out for us and we do not need to think about it. This is something that none of us wants to happen, so it is a temptation we need to overcome quite quickly. There are other, more subtle temptations which may come our way and in these first reflections we are encouraged to consider them. Henri Nouwen, the great spiritual writer, identified them in his book 'In the Name of Jesus'. These include the temptation to be relevant – we can't change because it will stop us from being needed, the temptation to be spectacular, when we seek popularity rather than ministry and the temptation to be powerful, when who I am is more important than anyone else. All these temptations can subtly play their part when we are in a process of discerning a new way.

In any form of team ministry, the 'team' will be made up of different personalities who potentially have different goals. The aim of the discernment process is to come to a shared vision, a shared approach and a shared commitment. The transformation which will lead to this may be challenging and at times painful, but ultimately can lead us to be life-giving and flourishing communities witnessing in faith to the love of God as modelled by Jesus. He is our role model, our rock and our hope.

Video: The Call to be a People of Hope through Lent

Watch and listen to Fr. Tom Finnegan

Prayerfully read this passage from the Gospel of Mark

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness 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."

- Take some to ponder on the words you have just read.
- Notice if there is anything, a word or phrase that stands out for you.
- Read the passage again and then reflect upon all or some of these questions: if you are doing this as a family or a group, make sure everyone is given the opportunity to speak.

Personal Reflections

- Where are the desert places in my own life?
- What temptations am I facing in this present time?

Now thinking about your parish and local community

- What is it that people find when they come to our churches? Is it something welcoming and encouraging and if so, what would show this? If not, why is this the case?
- Where might we experience the desert places in our parish communities?
- What temptations do we face as a parish?
- How might our desire to be relevant blind us to the needs of others in the deanery?
- What good news did Jesus proclaim?
- In what ways do we as a parish community share it with others?
- In what ways might we fail to do this?

Action

- Identify one area of good news within your parish community and one area of life in the deanery that needs transformation.
- Make a note of these thoughts and identify what you think you might do to help the transformation which you have identified.

Finish with a prayer asking the Holy Spirit for the grace to respond.

