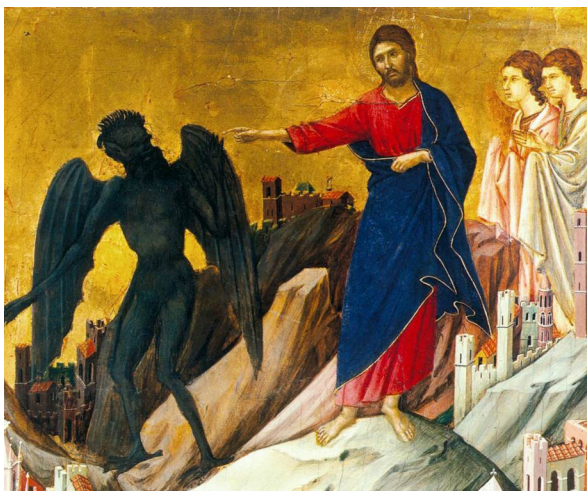


# FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT, GOSPEL REFLECTION

*The Gospel for the first Sunday of Lent is Matthew 4:1-11*

MATTHEW 4:1-2

At that time Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry.



Immediately after Jesus' baptism, Matthew tells us that he was **led by the spirit** into the wilderness. There, he has to wrestle with some fundamental questions about being the Beloved Son of God, which we read just a few verses earlier.

In essence, he has to come to grips with who he is and who God is calling him to be.

Philip Yancey says that he, through the 3 traditional temptations, is enticed with wearing a crown without carrying a cross. And Jesus the Christ knows all too well that this sort of life is not what will bring about the fulfillment of God's Kingdom.

Isn't that so true for each us, also? As we are about to begin a commitment or say a radical "yes", just as Jesus was about to begin his public ministry, we have to come to grips with who we are. We have to turn down the "easy way" and embrace a life of sacrificial and self-emptying love.

We would prefer to have the dazzling life, the crown-topped existence, and skip over the struggle. Jesus teaches us, in these instances, to have the long view in mind, and to always have God's ways in our heart as we strive to help bring about the Kingdom. We must allow ourselves to be **led by the spirit** into the unknown wilderness, where we can come to more fully understand who God is calling us to be.



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