First Sunday of Lent - ‘Temptation’ (year A)

I take the theme of temptation from the readings today. In the Gospel the Temptations of riches, power and prestige, are placed before Jesus and he rejects them outright.

Where do temptations come from? I have heard it said that sin is 95% opportunity and 5% temptation. I wonder, now, is it not the other way round? Today, the first Sunday of lent we are invited to re-set our compass so that it always and only points us in the direction of God.

Lent is also an opportune time to do an examination of conscience. I want to share with you on by contrasting two insects.

A spider and a bee.

The web is an extension of the spider; whatever comes into contact with it is trapped, bound, dies slowly and is eventually consumed by the spider.

The bee, in contrast, is drawn towards the beauty of flowers, by the colour and smells. It receives its nectar but does not damage the flower in the process; it cooperates with the flowers by carrying its pollen to other flowers. Both are enriched by the encounter.

Are you a spider or bee? Are people/others trapped by you and damaged by you? Or, are people/others enriched by their encounter with you? Are you a taker or a giver?

This is a useful reflection so as to re-align our thinking and our priorities as we prepare ourselves for the celebration of Easter by renewing our baptismal promises.

What compromises does our society make to maintain our position of riches, power and prestige in the world? What do we assent to, to maintain our quality of life? What compromises have you made in your life to gain advantage over others? In what way has hypocrisy and secrecy defined you.

Today’s Gospel is a key passage in Christ’s self understanding as the Son of God. He chose to become who he is now.

Jesus said to him ‘away with you Satan’ for it is written ‘worship the Lord your God and serve only him.’

The season of Lent is another opportunity to examine our behaviours and to reset the compass guiding us on life’s journey.