

#1 Sunday of Lent C Cycle 2019

Traveling in space for a year

- **Close your eyes**
- **Travel to space station and stay for a year; we give up things:**
 - **No running to the mall**
 - **No ice cream Sundays**
 - **No gravity**
 - **No family Thanksgiving meal**
- **But we gain insights:**
 - **Time to reflect**
 - **See the wonders of space**
 - **Ponder a world without borders**

This actually happened a few years ago.

He was a twin

When he came back to earth after spending a year in space. The doctors tested his DNA and other bodily functions and compared them to his identical twin brother. There and been some significant changes.

Today we formally begin a period of 40 days of Lent, a season of renewal leading up to Easter.

Lent should not be like some negative religious experience

Rather it should be like deciding to go to live in the space station for forty days.

It is an opportunity to live differently for a while,

to give up certain day to day things, relationships, activities and focus on things which will last for eternity.

It is to lead us to a closer encounter with Jesus, an encounter which can change our lives.

God invites us to choose special acts of penance, prayer and caring for those in need...ways of entering our own space capsule, to come closer to him.

That is similar to what is happening to Jesus in the gospel today. Jesus is led by the Spirit! It was Jesus' choice into the desert. God uses the 40 days to challenge the faithfulness of his Son. The Spirit also invites US to enter into our space capsule today and check out our own faithfulness. During his forty days, Jesus fasts, prays and prepares for a life of service to others, especially those who need healing and are

considered the lowly in the world. He comes to know the will of his Father and follows it.

Our challenge is the same: We are tempted daily to indulge ourselves with food, drink, bad relationships, and the number of hours we spend on our electronic devices (an average of 2 hours a day). If we are to see things differently in our space capsule, we need to fast. We need to choose something to stay away from so that we can spend more time building up our relationship with God and with one another.

The devil then says to Jesus, “I will give you all the power and glory of all the kingdoms in the world, if you but bow down and adore me”. During our time in our space capsule of 40 days, we realize how little control we have over our lives. How many years will we live? How we can rich will we be? How we cannot even control the weather.

We, like Jesus are tempted to take control of our lives. But when we try to have power over everything in our lives...and try to dominate everyone in our lives... we begin to isolate ourselves, build fences to protect ourselves. We forget that we are all related to one another and to God. As Fr. Tom Lumpkin at Generations of Faith last week

reminded us, we are always tempted to protect ourselves: we build fenced communities, we defend ourselves with bombs and military might.

But as we reflect from our time in space this lent, we realize that we are called not to isolate ourselves but to be in good relationship with God, others and our earth. For we all breathe the same air. We share the same earth; we drink the same water. We can see from our space capsule that we are all brothers and sisters.

During this season of Lent we need to build up consciousness through prayer:

Especially recommend the Little Black Book and the Emmaus faith sharing group.

Finally the devil takes Jesus to the highest point of the temple in Jerusalem and says, "Throw yourself down and let your Father take care of you. Jesus is going to throw himself down, but it will be by revealing the compassion of his Father, proclaiming his kingdom of justice and peace, bringing healing and hope to the downtrodden in spirit and having total trust in his Father even to death on the cross.

If we use the 40 days of Lent well, we will encounter more deeply the Lord. Our the DNA of our lives will change. We will see things differently. Our lives, will be poured out more in the service of others. Our generosity towards others, especially those in need will increase. Our trust in God will become more evident to others as we witness to his presence in our lives.

Well, my brothers and sister, here it is, I offer you a ticket to an experience which change your life. Or should I say, God is offering the opportunity of a lifetime. I invite you to choose life, a richer life for you and your descendants.

Come, encounter Jesus, and be changed!