

Lent 1C - 2022

"Mom, why the heck are we here in the Toronto zoo?"

A mother camel and her baby are talking one day and the baby camel asks, "Mom, why have we got these huge three-toed feet?" The mother replies, "To enable us trek across the soft sand of the desert without sinking." "And why have we got these long, heavy eyelashes?" "To keep the sand out of our eyes on the trips through the desert" replies the mother camel. "And Mom, why have we got these big humps on our backs?" The mother, now a little impatient with the boy replies, "They are there to help us store fat for our long treks across the desert, so we can go without water for long periods." "OK, I get it!" says the baby camel, "We have huge feet to stop us sinking, long eyelashes to keep the sand from our eyes and humps to store water. Then, Mom, why the heck are we here in Canada, freezing in the Toronto Zoo?" — Modern life sometimes makes one feel like a camel in a zoo. And like camels in a zoo, we need sometimes to go into the desert in order to discover who we truly are and how we are expected to live our lives as true followers of a crucified and Risen God. Lent invites us to enter into this kind of desert experience of prayer and penance. (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>)

Lent: Spring Training For Christians

When I was a boy, I was told, "Baptists don't do Lent." No one knew why. I suspect that it was an anti-Catholic thing which I pray we are over. It was the old argument, "whatever they do, we don't!" - a curiously convoluted, twisted and unhealthy way to decide on religious practices. Whatever the reason for "not doing Lent," I think it is a great loss for any Christian not to prepare for Good Friday and Easter. Every spring the baseball players prepare for the season with spring training; every spring ordinary people prepare for summer by doing "spring cleaning." So why shouldn't Christians prepare for the most important events in Jesus' ministry - what he did for us on Good Friday and Easter Sunday, what he did for us on Golgotha's cross and at the empty tomb? If it helps you, think of Lent as a kind of Christian spring training and spring cleaning. (by John Ewing Roberts from *Remembering and Forgetting*)

Knowing Temptation

"A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is . . . A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later. That is why bad people, in one sense, know very little about badness. They have lived a sheltered life by always giving in. We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because He was the only man

who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means - the only complete realist." (by C.S. Lewis)

Dante's View

In Death Valley there is a place known as Dante's View. There, you can look down to the lowest spot in the United States, a depression in the earth 200 feet below sea level called Bad Water. But from that same spot, you can also look up to the highest peak in the United States, Mount Whitney, rising to a height of 14,500 feet. One way leads to the lowest and the other way to the highest. From that point, called Dante's View, any movement must be in one or the other direction. There are many times in life when we stand where the ways part and where choices must be made. It is often easier to trip along downhill than to walk the steady, or maybe rocky, uphill path. But the path uphill leads to a cross -- an empty cross. And the one that walks beside us is the one who hung there and defeated it. (by Glenn E. Ludwig from *Walking To, Walking With, Walking Through*, CSS Publishing Company)

We Haven't Been Up To Bat Yet

Temptation tries to blind us to other possibilities. A business man driving home from work one day, saw a little league baseball game in progress. He decided to stop and watch. He sat down in the bleachers and asked a kid what the score was. "We're behind 14 to nothing," he answered with a smile. "Really," he responded. "I have to say you don't look very discouraged." "Discouraged?" the boy asked with a puzzled look on his face. "Why should we be discouraged? We haven't been up to bat yet." (by Brett Blair, www.eSermons.com)

"Always look up to the Master's face."

Leslie Dunkin once told about a dog he had when he was a boy. This was an unusually obedient dog. Periodically his father would test the dog's obedience. He would place a tempting piece of meat on the floor. Then he would turn toward the dog and give the command, "No!" The dog, which must have had a strong urge to go for the meat, was placed in a most difficult situation to obey or disobey his master's command. Dunkin said, "The dog never looked at the meat. He seemed to feel that if he did, the temptation to disobey would be too great. So he looked steadily at my father's face." Dunkin then made this spiritual application: "There is a lesson for us all. Always look up to the Master's face." (Rev. Adrian Dieleman, <http://www.trinitycrc.org/sermons/jam1v13-18.html>) As the hymn puts it, "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, / look full in his wonderful face; / then the things of earth will grow strangely dim / in the light of his glory and grace." (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>)