

First Sunday of Lent – Year C
March 10, 2019

Scripture Readings: Deuteronomy 26: 4-10 ✕ Psalm 91 1-2, 10-15 ✕ Romans 10:8-13 ✕ Luke 4: 1-13

Fis first and only novel has become a classic, still taught in literature courses, still debated, still talked about — and still selling — four decades later. But repelled by the demands of his newfound celebrity and numbed by the sudden deaths of several loved ones in sudden and rapid succession, he entombed himself in a barricaded walk-up apartment, watching life go by from his window and writing brilliant stories and books that he allows no one to read.

His name is William Forrester and he is one of the two main characters in the movie *Finding Forrester*.

The second main character in the film is a 16-year-old named Jamal, who is a closet genius and hides his brilliance behind street smarts and his prowess on the basketball court. On a dare, Jamal breaks into Forrester's dusty apartment and drops his notebooks as he leaves.

Later, even the gruff Forrester is impressed with the talent he sees in the pages and returns the notebooks to Jamal — with written questions, suggestions, comments, and criticisms. Compelled to look past the differences of age, color, and backgrounds, the two forge an unlikely and often contentious relationship — but Jamal finds a mentor who will challenge him and change him forever. And Forrester has his first reason in years to emerge from his self-imposed solitude.

In their shared love for the written word, both find their voices and their lives — Jamal discovers a new passion for his writing and literature; Forrester finds himself, in the winter of his life, re-awakening to the world he wrote so brilliantly about years before.

In his last letter to his young protégé, Forrester writes: “You need to know that while I knew so very early that you would realize your dreams, I never imagined I would once again realize my own.”

In opening himself to Jamal's friendship, in seeking a teenager's success at the expense of his own self-pity, Forrester “finds” his way out of his wilderness of cynicism and isolation. In accepting the old man's help and guidance, Jamal “finds” his gift for learning.

This Lenten springtime is a time for “finding” our way out of the winters of cynicism, our deserts of self-absorption, our wilderness of despair and hopelessness. All things that come out of the daily struggle of human life and, often out of the sinfulness that exists in the human heart.

These days before Easter's dawning are a time for deciding what we want our lives to be, what values we want to place at the center of our lives. These are the days for “finding” our true selves, for “finding” our lives and the meaning of this time that has been given to us by God.