

**Matthew 4:1-11**

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished.

The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”

But he answered, “It is written,  
*‘One does not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’*”

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

*‘He will command his angels concerning you,  
and ‘On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’*”

Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

*‘Worship the Lord your God,  
and serve only him.’*”

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

What <b>RISES</b> out of this text?	What do you <b>RESIST</b> in this text?
How does this <b>RELATE</b> to something you are carrying?	What do you want to <b>REMEMBER</b> from this time?

**The liturgical season of Lent** is a 40-day journey that takes us to Holy Week and Easter.

Lent is preceded by the **revelry of Shrovetide** or Carnival (familiar celebrations of Mardi Gras/Fat Tuesday), originally a time for confession and preparation which is now more associated with the feasting ahead of entering into the fast of wilderness.

***How have you celebrated recently?***

***What has brought you joy?***

***Where have you experienced abundance in a delightfully way?***

Following the excesses of Shrove Tuesday, **Ash Wednesday** comes with its **invitation to remember our mortality**. While our culture encourages to live in denial of death, for centuries, Christians have made this remembrance a constant part of their spiritual practice, remembering that each moment is a gift to be appreciated.

***When you reflect on your own mortality what emerges?***

***What is stirred?***

As much as the imposition of ashes is to remind us of our mortality, we also remember that we need to daily die to the ways in us that have nothing to do with Jesus.

***In what ways do you need to die to self?***

The 40 days of Lent reflect the 40 days of testing Jesus experienced in the wilderness. Lent is a time to consider our appetites and desires. Sometimes we reflect on the wilderness as a place of testing. Testing reveals our inner essence.

***Who are you?***

***What do you really want?***

***What positive effect has a testing experience had on your life?***

A common Lenten practice is fasting, which is about abstaining from something to make more space to receive from God.

***What do you need to release in this season?***

***What practice will you embrace for Lent?***

***What could you simplify in your life that would free you up for the things that really matter?***

