

**Reflection on the Gospel-First Sunday of Lent Year A
(Matthew 4:1-11)**

-Veronica Lawson RSM

Lent comes around each year and presents us with its usual challenge to take stock of our lives, to see more clearly what is in our hearts, and to discover what might be calling us out of our comfort zones. It is a time for personal as well as group reflection, a time for entering into the “wilderness” and grappling with the mysteries of life, as well as a time of preparation for Easter. Today’s liturgy invites us to reflect on Jesus’ forty-day experience in the wilderness. Jesus is “filled with the Holy Spirit” and, like so many humans before and since, is “led by the Spirit” into the wilderness of life to be “tested” there. [“Tested” is a more accurate translation of the Greek than is “tempted”].

Forty is a significant number in Israel’s story: the great flood lasts forty days and forty nights; Moses spends forty days and forty nights on the mountain of God; Israel wanders for forty years in the wilderness; King David reigns for forty years; the prophet Elijah travels forty days and forty nights in the wilderness on his way to the mountain of God. Explanations of its significance vary: a round number for long time; a time of testing or trial; totality or fullness.

The wilderness is ever so real and at the same time symbolic. In Israel’s story, it is the place of testing for God’s people: “Remember the long way that your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness... testing you to know what was in your heart” (Deut 8:2). In Matthew’s account, the “devil” is the “tester” or “tempter”, the instrument of God’s testing. In each instance, the test is expressed in terms of Jesus’ relationship to God: “If you are the son of God...” The Matthean Jesus passes the tests that the people of Israel have failed in the wilderness of Sinai. He refuses the way of special favour from God, the way of status or self-aggrandisement. He is prepared to suffer whatever it takes to bring healing and wholeness to a broken world. In other words, he chooses the way of God’s empire or the empire “of the heavens” rather than the brutality of the Roman Empire. Jesus demonstrates that he is indeed “of God”.

Most people of faith would agree that being “of God” right now has more than a little to do with the way we relate to all of Earth’s human and other-than-human inhabitants, the value we ascribe to Earth’s precious resources, and the respect we show for life through our responsible use of those resources. Lent calls us to reject the path of domination or greed or status so that, like Jesus, we may be truly “of God”.

BULLETIN FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A



ST ALIPIUS PARISH, BALLARAT EAST

Including St Peter & Paul’s, Buninyong

Parish Address: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East. 3350

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**MASS TIMETABLE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING
MONDAY, 6th MARCH 2017**

MONDAY:	No Mass
TUESDAY:	No Mass
WEDNESDAY:	No Mass
THURSDAY:	No Mass
FRIDAY:	No Mass

NEXT WEEKEND’S MASSES

ST. ALIPIUS	SAT	6.00 PM
	SUN	10.30 AM
BUNINYONG	SUN	9.00 AM

2nd SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A

READINGS -	First:	Genesis 12:1-4
	Second:	2 Timothy 1:8-10
	Gospel:	Matthew 17:1-9

RECENT DEATH: John Nolan.

ANNIVERSARIES: Brian Lewis, Barry Ridsdale, Michael Perkins, Vin Liston, Barb Gleeson, Margaret D’Cruz, A. Mary Soosay, Max Gilbert.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Nathan Cambell, Denise Learmonth, Cath Wheelahan, Barbara Keirl, Mick Kent, Terry McGarry, Kevin Walsh, Peter McDonald (Ocean Grove), Peter Clohesy, Frank Nolan (Buninyong), Mary Barnett, Fiona Dickinson.

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: **Team 9:** J. Patton ©, B. Brisbane, J. O'Brien, J. Gibcus.

Next Week: **Team 10:** P. Saunders ©. M. Saunders.



COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$ 1,094.00
	Loose money:	\$ 300.00
	Credit cards:	\$ 5,012.00
	Direct debits:	\$ 620.00
		\$ 7,026.00

PRESBYTERY: \$ 821.00

RETREAT

In line with the Gospel Fr Peter is heading out in the wilderness but only for 7 days not 40.

Fr Peter will be away on retreat this week - pray for him as he will pray for you.

LENTEN REFLECTION

Each Thursday in the Church Meeting Room from 10.00—11.00 am.

The opportunity is offered to join others and share in reflection on the Sunday Gospels throughout Lent.

CHOIR FOR MASS OF THE OILS—2017

Singers and musicians are invited to join the music group which is being formed for this Mass on Monday, 10th April, 2017. Practice times will be advised. Please contact Julie Boyd at the Pastoral Ministry Office to register your interest at: julie.boyd@ballarat.catholic.org.au

AINARO TIMOR-LESTE FUNDRAISING BUSH DANCE

Saturday, 25th March at Donegan's Farm, Gordon from 6.30—11.00 pm.

Proceeds to Health Scholarship Fund.

Enquiries to: Desley 0429 075 173 or Barry 0409 458 053.

See Notice Board for further information.

SOCIAL AFTERNOON

Wednesday, 8th March in the Mercy Centre at 2.00 pm. Please enter via Gent Street.

FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Venue: Mercy Gathering room, Gent Street, Ballarat East.

Dates: 16th March; 27th April; 18th May; 22nd June; 20th July.

Sr Veronica Lawson and Fr Barry Ryan announce five two-hour sessions on the meaning of faith commitment in the contemporary world.

Simply contact Sr Veronica by email (veronica.lawson@mercy.org.au) or by phone (0408 392 297) with any enquiries.

Donation to cover the cost is \$20.00. Note that this is a new course, not a repeat of either the 2015 or the 2016 sessions.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Ss Peter & Paul's, Buninyong, will be having the Stations of the Cross each Wednesday evening during Lent at 7.00 pm. All welcome.

xt3 LENTEN CALENDAR

For youth, young adults and everyone—online Lenten calendar and free app for your mobile device is now available at <http://www.xt3.com/lent/>

STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Would the user of Env No 92 please contact Jim at the Parish Office on 5332 6611 as we do not know who you are.

PARISH APPOINTMENTS

Bishop Paul has announced the following Parish appointments:

Fr Neville Stanislaus will become Parish Priest of Camperdown and Timboon from 1st May, and Fr Alex Lim will take up the care of the parishes of Warracknabeal and Hopetoun.

From the same time Fr Peter Hudson will take up the care of the Parish of Nhill, in addition to his care of the parish of Horsham.

MEDITATION

“When you pray, go to your private room, shut yourself in, and so pray...in that secret place, and your God who sees all that is done in secret will reward you”.

Matthew 6:6

Reflect on these words. Let the words give way to silence. Just rest for a few moments in God's presence.