

It is hard to believe that Lent began last Wednesday as I could have sworn that 2010 just started. I have to admit that I enjoyed worship on Wednesday even though I was pretty tired by the 7:30.

The season of Lent is a time of preparation as we look at our lives and see if there is an area in our relationship with God that needs a little work. One thing that many people do during this time is to make some kind of sacrifice by giving up something. As part of my Lenten journey, I decided that I would give up pop in general, but specifically Mountain Dew.

As I already mentioned, I was pretty tired by the end of worship on Wednesday and that had not changed by the time Thursday morning came around. I walked into my office and sat down in front of the computer and decided that I was still pretty tired. Since I had 50cents in my pocket, I thought a Mountain Dew sounded pretty good to get me jump started.

I was half way down the stairs when I remembered that I was giving it up for Lent so I went back up to my office and tried to work on the puter. After a couple of minutes I got up and started back down to the pop machine but turned around again. After the 3rd or 4th time, I finally gave in and bought the Mountain Dew.

That is the way temptation works. Temptation comes at you, especially when you are at your weakest to get you to give in. It doesn't matter what the temptation is because it will keep pulling at you until you break down and it wins. That is the way temptation works, it keeps coming at you time after time until you are able to move away from it or give in to it.

I haven't had a drink of pop since Thursday morning and it really hasn't been a big problem. But I was so run down on Thursday morning that I gave in. I could not resist the urge or desire for a mountain dew that I finally had one.

Now you may be thinking that a pop is no big deal when it comes to temptation and I would have to agree that it isn't. But temptation doesn't care how big or small it is as long as you give in. The temptation could be to cheat on a test or to steal something. The temptation could be considering an affair or killing someone. Temptation could be using God's name in vain or even worshiping idols.

In our gospel reading, Jesus had just been baptized when he was led out into the wilderness for 40 days. Throughout those days, Jesus was tempted by the devil and not once did he give in. When the 40 days were finally over and Jesus was at his weakest, the devil approached him once again and tempted him 3 more times.

The devil was a little tricky when he tempted Jesus with food. Satan said, “If you are the son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” Jesus responded, “One does not live by bread alone.” The devil then showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and promised to give them to him if Jesus would worship him. Jesus answered, “Worship the Lord your God, and serve only HIM.”

By the time Satan got to the final temptation, he was catching on to what Jesus was doing. Every time that Jesus was tempted, he responded by quoting the Old Testament and so Satan quoted it by saying, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you, and on their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’” Jesus responded, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.” After this final temptation, the devil left with Jesus resisting every temptation that the devil had thrown at him.

The devil is kind of tricky with the 1st and 3rd temptations because he says, “If you are the son of God.” He already knows that Jesus is the son of God otherwise he would not have spent all this time trying to get Jesus to give in. He was trying to get Jesus to prove he was the son of God by doing things that God did not want him to do.

Throughout it all, Jesus remained faithful. He is the only person to be tempted and not give in to sin. Jesus grounded himself in God to help resist the devil’s temptations. He trusted in God knowing that all things are possible in HIM and that is the most important thing we can learn from today’s gospel.

As we are faced with our own temptations, we can ground ourselves in God just as Jesus did and pray for his strength so that we may resist the temptations. There will be times when we give in to them, but we will also be forgiven by God when we do so.