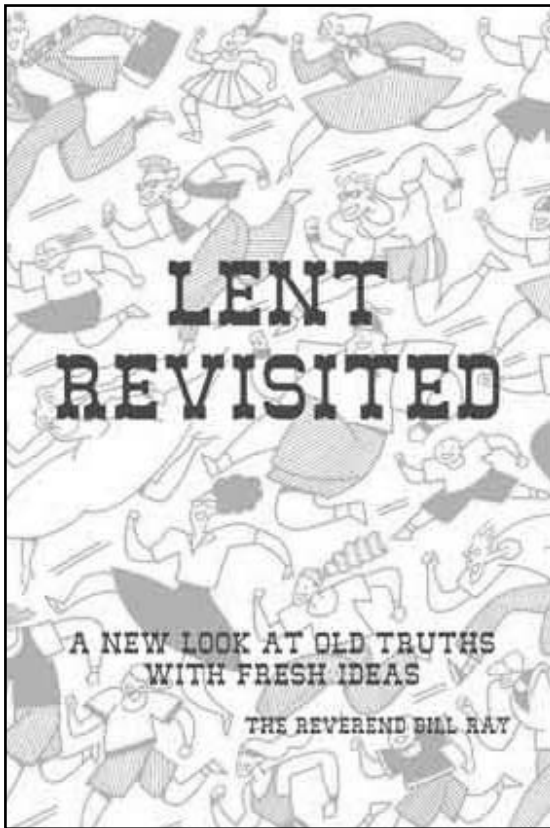


Lent *Re - Visited*



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Home Group Contract

For the next five weeks, we agree to the following commitment as a group.

- [] **ATTENDANCE:** To give priority to group meetings.
- [] **PARTICIPATION:** To make every effort to participate fully within the group.
- [] **CONFIDENTIALITY:** To keep confidential everything that is shared.
- [] **ACCOUNTABILITY:** To accept the challenge to reach the goals we have set ourselves.
- [] **ACCESSIBILITY:** To give one another the right to call at any time for spiritual help in time of need - even in the middle of the night.
- [] **EVANGELISM:** To make an effort to each encourage one person to join this group.

SPECIFICS

We will meet on(Day of week)
 We will meet at(Home/Place)
 The meeting will begin at..... and close at
 We agree to all have left by to not over stay our welcome.

GROUND RULES

- [] Refreshments
- [] Baby Sitting
- [] Newcomers.....
- [] Absence.....

I WILL TRY WITH GOD'S HELP TO BE A REGULAR, FAITHFUL, CARING MEMBER OF THIS GROUP.

NAMES OF GROUP MEMBERS	PHONE
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

REMEMBER:

NEW PEOPLE CAN JOIN THE GROUP AT ANY TIME.

A group that cares

One of the special ways group members value each other is when special events are recognised.

One way to show the members of the group you care for them is to take a little time at the first meeting to note each other's special days.

This could take the form of an icebreaker and if this was the case then you could include some fun things. Eg: Your first kiss, graduation, first car, first date etc.

More general would be birthdays (You don't need the year although the inquisitive will try) and wedding anniversary.

If any of these events happen during the time the group meets, why not have a special cake to commemorate this?

It is also a good idea for someone to be appointed as the 'pastoral co-ordinator' to see that these events are not forgotten. It is this care that makes a small group, like the one you are in, special and valued.

Group member's name	Special events and dates

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDIES

“Lent Re-Visited”

Introduction

One of the things I find fascinating in this modern life is that people of all ages comment on how quickly each year passes. The pace of life has increased. We tend to go from one thing to another. One of the challenges before us, as Christians today, is to use Lent in a creative and imaginative way, so that the forty days are a period of "spiritual stocktake" and growth.



The Rev'd Bill Ray

It is very easy to come to Lent again and then to carry on as though nothing has changed.

With this study I am taking the approach of revisiting familiar Lenten passages and asking new and different questions of them. Some of the questions will relate to our individual lives, while others will relate to living out our lives as a Church, as a community of faith with the hope of being a faithful and effective community of witness.

There are many things that people can do during Lent. We can fast and give the estimated amount of money for the meal to mission. We can be more disciplined in our daily prayers. We can also use Lent as a time to re-examine how we prepare for Sunday worship.

When I was young, I read the following line in my parish paper 'may you have a holy and miserable Lent'. At the time I was shocked. I think many people believe that Lent has to be a miserable time of the Church Year.

However, I do hope that you have a holy Lent. The word "holy" basically means "to set apart". Your Lent certainly does not have to be miserable, in fact it can be a very exciting time. May this be the case for you. Also may this Lent be a life-giving, stimulating and challenging

time that truly prepares you to celebrate the Resurrection with both joy and vigor and in a new and creative way.

The biblical texts used in this study are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSV) and the prayers are from A Prayer Book for Australia (APBA). Other references are acknowledged.

So enjoy these studies and I pray you have a holy and blessed Lent.

God bless.

“Lent Revisited”

is a fresh look at many old truths.

It will be a time to revisit, refocus and redirect when:-

- facing temptation.
- undergoing suffering (or transformation).
 - principles are being challenged.
 - focussing on belief.
- reflecting on life and death.



Remember that at anytime during the five week home group you would prefer not to comment, then all you need to say is “Pass”, and the leader knows not to ask you on that question.

Temptation

"And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.
 ...[and] He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan
 ...and he was with the wild beasts;
 ...and the angels waited on him"
 (Mark 1:12-13 NRSV)

When you were growing up, how did you address temptation? What advice did you receive? Was it, "Ignore temptation and lead a wholesome Christian life? (Assuming that all would be well!). Or was it, "Stay away from those people and don't get mixed up with them?" (Whoever "those people" may have been!)

It is not quite that simple is it? Temptation in life is a reality.

The verb "tempt" as it is used today, generally refers "to entice", especially in regard to making moral choices. However, the Biblical meaning is more "to prove" or "to test".

Lent is an ideal time to undertake a "spiritual check up". In the past the focus has been on the individual undertaking a spiritual check up. Often it has been in the area of personal spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, Bible reading, worship and almsgiving. These areas are important. However, change is a part of life, and temptations come in new forms.

In this study I want to share some of the temptations I have experienced in recent years that have challenged me to refocus my prayer life, Bible Reading, worship, almsgiving and outreach to others.

Four areas of temptation I have had to address are:

1. The temptation to succumb to Compassion Fatigue

The other day in the mail I received three requests for donations. All were very worthy causes. There was the temptation to throw them all in the bin and say I have the charities or missions I give to and I am O.K. It suddenly dawned on me that while I may not be able to give financially to each and every cause, that does not stop me praying for that particular organisation and its work. These organisations serve people who have been created in the image of God. So that moment of temptation was a turning point for me.

2. The temptation of not standing in the shoes of others.

I grew up in the country. I now minister in the city, but I have family on the land.

Recently someone was saying how easy life must be for those who live in the country.

This comment made me aware of comments I have heard from country people about life being easy in the city. Life today is not easy either in the city or country. Until we stand in the shoes of another we do not know what life is like for them. I am aware that I know something of the land and its trials, of teaching and ministry within the Anglican Church, but I don't know what it is like in many other fields such as medicine, law, accountancy, research and the list can go on. I must not be tempted to judge because of my lack of experience or ignorance.

3. The temptation of being influenced by society.

Paul in his letter to the Romans states, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2)

Living in an age where there is constant advertising, and the temptation to be influenced by society, Paul reminds us that our starting point in our thinking and approach is with God.

4. The temptation to be quiet, or "down play" a situation.

One of the baptismal promises states that we are to "renounce the devil and all his works". In the past, I have fallen to the temptation of not saying anything when I know something is wrong or unjust. Over the years I have had to take "myself in hand" and be an advocate for someone or to address matters that I previously hoped would go away. On one occasion I had to confront the matter of Satanic worship. I was visiting a grieving family. They enquired as to what various symbols meant on the walls of their daughter's bedroom. They showed me some leaflets and said they did not understand them.

I realised that the issue of Satanic worship was not going "to go away" for this family so I had to be proactive. Yes, it took a lot of prayer, and prayer support, but in being prepared to address the matter I was surprised how much I grew and several of us experienced blessings that we did not believe possible.

There are many issues in today's world, about which Christians can not remain silent.

Finally:

Lent is a time to revisit, refocus and redirect. The question to revisit is how do we address temptation and how can we refocus this Lent so that our lives will be redirected by God more fully?

Sharing with others

Focus: Temptation



Welcome and introductions

Group members are invited to introduce themselves stating which service of worship they attend and something they enjoy about the Parish.



Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

Say together the Ash Wednesday and Lent Prayer

*Almighty and everlasting God,
you hate nothing that you have made,
and you forgive the sins of all who penitent:
create and make in us new and contrite hearts,
that we, worthily lamenting our sins,
and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may obtain of you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*



Getting started (15 minutes)

Over the years how have you experienced Lent?

- Has it been a holy time?
- Was it a time when you just gave up things and wondered why?
- Did you take on an extra discipline or activity during Lent?
- Were you drawn closer to God?

After people have briefly shared answers to one or more of the above questions, participants are invited to share one hope they have for this Lent.



Read the Scripture passage (5 minutes)

Mark 1:12-13

Questions for reflection (40 minutes)

(You will need to make a selection)



1. What insights have you gained in addressing temptation in your life?
2. "Have you ever had the experience of "being driven into the wilderness"?"
Some of the writers on the topic of spirituality suggest there is a connection between "being in the wilderness" and spiritual growth. If this has been your experience you are invited to share your insights. If it has not been your experience, do you have insights as to why this was not so for you?
3. What temptations do we face as a Church?
4. When you pray the Lord's Prayer and say the lines:-
"Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil"

What are we praying? Share your thoughts and feelings.
5. In the Baptism service, the candidates who are able to answer for themselves, and the sponsors are asked:-

"Do you renounce Satan and all evil?"

The reply:- *"I renounce all that is evil."*

How do you interpret this question and promise in this day and age?
6. The text states, "and angels waited on him."

Have there been times when you have felt tempted, but you have felt "supported", "upheld" or "encouraged" at that time?
What insights or learnings did you gain?
7. What are some of the issues in society that Christians must not remain silent about? What can we do as individuals and as a community of faith to address these issues and show the love of God in action?
8. The Lenten tip for this week is a "Rule for Lent".

How does this rule speak to you and what challenges does it offer you?
How does it broaden your understanding of "fasting" and "feasting"?
Do you think "living into" this rule will enhance your celebration of Easter and new life?



Discussion highlights

Record the key points you would like to keep as a group

Closing prayer (5 minutes)

After a time of silence.

Invite someone to read "A Rule for Lent" slowly. Allow time for peace, to reflect, and for people to offer to God a line of this Rule that they intend to address this coming week.

Invite another person to read "A Rule for Lent" slowly.

Conclude by saying together the Prayer for the First Sunday of Lent.



*God of the new and eternal covenant,
as the forty days of the great flood
swept away the world's corruption
and watered new beginnings of righteousness and life:
grant to us, who are washed clean and born again
in the saving flood of baptism, the wellspring of your grace,
that your gift of new life may flourish once again;
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever...Amen*

Hospitality

Hospitality is important. It enables people to catch up.

Invite the group to discuss the most suitable time for hospitality:



- Is it soup and bread before the study?
- Is it coffee and cake before or after the study?
- Is it cheese and biscuits, along with dried fruits and nuts at the end?
- If the group members are from different nations, is it a different national delight each week?

Decide who will be responsible for the hospitality for the next week, or even the next couple of weeks. Please take into account dietary needs of group members.

A Lenten Tip:



*Fast from criticism, and feast on praise;
Fast from self-pity, and feast on joy;
Fast from ill-temper. and feast on peace;
Fast from resentment, and feast on contentment;
Fast from jealousy, and feast on humility;
Fast from pride, and feast on love;
Fast from selfishness, and feast on service;
Fast from fear, and feast on faith.*