

MOVING WITH OUR EXTERNAL DISCIPLINES TO FIND AN INTERNAL AWARENESS

WEEK ONE: THE DESERT

As we begin week one, the season of Lent draws us into a richness of depth. We see our Savior, Jesus, tempted. We see the tension between what is happening to Him externally in the desert for forty days to His finding the inner strength to fight the temptation, not with just external strength but with an awareness that comes from a spiritual force that is divine. When the temptation is hunger, Jesus pushes through the excruciating hunger pain to say there is another place to feed, another place that can refresh that is not of this world. When tempted by the devil with regards to power, once again seeing all the kingdoms of the world, Jesus fights back with an inner awareness that only the Lord our God should be worshipped and that kind of power is different from the world's interpretation of it. What is seen is the true saving power of God internally manifested through acknowledgment and worship of the only One who we are called to serve. The third temptation involves the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God. The devil wants to tempt Jesus to throw Himself down in order to give evil the proof it desires on evil's terms. Jesus once again draws inner strength from Scripture to refute the devil.

All of this is a template. We are invited to make sure we come out of the desert of Lent relying on the correct things. We are invited to make sure all the Lenten observations we are experiencing externally are connected and integrated to bring us into a deeper internal awareness of the goodness of God. We need to be giving up things, but also adding works of charity. We need to be praying more, reading more Scripture, we need to attend Stations, and to make it to church more often. All the disciplines of our bodies and our time are to lead us to a new depth. This new depth is to drive us to an awareness of the one true God and all that He is wanting to reveal to us. We are to reach Holy Week stronger, more alive, and more convinced of the goodness of God. The experiences are to lead us to that which is internal. Seek to connect, seek to become aware, seek to know the depth and breadth of God.

Week one invites us to make sure our map is correct and our compass coordinated and set. Run to the desert, discipline the body, but be sure to connect it to where it leads. Discipline for the sake of discipline is just discipline. When it builds an awareness of God, it brings a force that leads us to eternity.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Fr. John".

Fr. John