



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast

March 5, 2023

“Why is Lent 40 days long?”

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him. After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand.” (Mark 1:12-15)

Why is Lent 40 days Long?

How do we count 40? Lent lasts from Ash Wednesday until the evening of Holy Thursday. If Sundays are excluded from the count, the season lasts forty days. The forty-day length of Lent is rooted in the biblical usage of the number forty. Also, many people will point to the passage in Mark’s Gospel: forty days is the length of Jesus’s time of trial in the desert in preparation for his public ministry, proclaiming the Gospel.

It should not be lost on us that 40 is a special number in the Bible: when you see “40” perk up! Something important is being revealed. 40 in the Bible indicates a time of testing, trial, penance, purification, and renewal. Some examples:

Testing and trial: the Israelites spent 40 years wandering in the desert (Joshua 5:6)

Purification: the rain poured down for 40 days and nights creating the Great Flood, which purified the Earth. (Genesis 7:4)

Renewal: the Earth was renewed as the Great Flood subsided and the mountain tops appeared. (Genesis 8:5-6)

During our 40 days journey we will encounter temptations and “wild beasts” too. But most of them will be inside us, and our work is to turn away from them. That is a big job, and we may feel there’s not enough time to deal with all our baggage. Of course, what is important in Lent is not the length or time spent: what’s important is to allow ourselves to come closer to God so we can hear Him better! That’s why prayer is an important part of Lent. “Ask and you will be answered.”

Prayer Box

Pray for recovery for Gloria, Lucy; Joyce waiting for medical care; Bill facing surgery; Mark facing a tough medical diagnosis; the people of Turkey, Syria, Russia, and Ukraine. Lord, hear our prayer!

Gospel Reading for the week of March 5: Matthew 14:13-21,

“Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand”

The Message of This Reading:

This must be one of the most famous stories about Jesus. Probably 90% of the people you ask would explain this passage like this: “Jesus fed a bunch of with just a little food – amazing – it was a miracle!”

Miracle indeed. Most people are struck by Jesus’s awesome power, just like the people present at the actual event. Five thousand people (“besides women and children”) ate a meal on five loaves and two fish.

Remember the conversation immediately before the feast, when the disciples were concerned about the crowd:

Disciples: “Send the crowd away, so they can go buy something to eat.”

Jesus: They do not need to go away – you give them something to eat.” [emphasis added]

Disciples: “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish.”

Jesus: “Bring them here to me.”

While we marvel at the power of Jesus, let us not forget his compassion for the people, and the importance of faith, obedience, and sharing. Jesus is able to provide for our needs, and we are called to follow his example and be participating partners with compassion and generosity for others in need.