



Small Group Newsletter
St. Mary of the Visitation Parish
Cambridge, (H) ONT.



THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

February 18, 2018

Introduction to the Word:

We get offended, put off and angry by so many things - traffic, being late, relationships, not meeting our goals. So often its over little things and sometimes over everything! Of course this slows us down and wears us out. Often all we need to do is "get over it", but the how can be a stumbling block. In our new series for the season of Lent we will ask ourselves what are the stumbling blocks to getting over stuff.

Warm-up Activity: (5-10 minutes)

What is it that I think God may be calling me to "give up" this Lent? How might this sacrifice help me to know that God is the centre of my life? What is it that I think God may be calling me to do during the Lenten season? How might I make a difference in the human family through these contributions to others? How will "giving up" something for Lent lead be away from temptation?

Let us pray together our Heart to Home Prayer:

*God Our Heavenly Father, we long to make our thoughts your thoughts,
and our ways your ways. As we prepare with attentive mind and open heart
to hear your Word Lord, we long to be empowered with your Spirit
so that we may bring your Word to our families, our parish and our communities.
This, our prayer, we make through the intercession of Our Lady of the Visitation and in name of
Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

GOSPEL (Mark 1:12-15)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

After Jesus was baptized, the Spirit drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on Him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Consider hearing again the Sunday Message as a Small Group

Reflection:

Each of us in our life gets offended or upset. It may come from something that breaks a law or rule or something we simply see as distasteful or unpleasant. Being offended in life is inevitable. You can't get through a year, a month, a week, or even a day without being offended in some way. Some offenses that we experience are simply perceived. We feel offended or hurt even though no real harm or injustice has been done to us. It is just our wounded pride or bruised ego. Then, there



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are real offenses. We live in a sin-stained world and people will lie to us or cheat us or steal from us or harm us in some other way. Sometimes these lead to anger, and sometimes that anger can be lingering and it can slow us down or impact our own success. Offenses are a trap, they are a temptation.

As we begin Lent we are painted with a picture in our Gospel of Jesus in the desert faced with temptation. In this encounter in the desert Jesus comes to portrays for us who He is and what He is about. Now Mark the Gospel writer does not go into the same detail of this happening as Matthew or Luke - we are not listed the temptations that Jesus faced - just that He was. So what is Temptation? Well for our series we will go with the working definition that it is “an invitation to embrace self-interest”

If we are not careful, we will take offenses into our heart and harbor them there. When we hold on to an offense, we become angry and entitled and self-centered. If this grows roots within us, then it is the invitation to look so much at what I want or need that the other becomes unimportant to our life. Yet what we must remember is that when your life is all about you, you don't just hurt yourself, you lose yourself.

You see the more we just look at ourselves, or remain locked in the mud of our own existence, the more we miss the opportunities that God gives us to discover who we are by interacting with others and learning through such. We have a choice about how to handle offenses. Rather than falling into a trap, we can choose to deal with temptation (“an invitation to embrace self-interest”) in a healthy manner.

[Please see supplementary materials using the Book “Perfectly Yourself” by Matthew Kelly](#)

Questions for Discussion: *(15-20 minutes)*

- Tell a story about a time you were offended. What are some things that most offend you?
- Choose one or two of the things that most offend you. Why do those things offend you?
- What is your most common reaction to being offended? (defensiveness, anger, revenge)
- How could give up temptation ? (“an invitation to embrace self-interest”)

Moving Forward in Prayer *(15-20 minutes)*

This time is reserved for quiet prayer as well as for an action-response to the communal reflections. You may wish to create and add petitions of prayer at this time. It is also intended to provide moments to “outreach” to the community.

- Offer a Holy Hour in Adoration for the intentions of our Parish and its Pastor.
- Is there a way your small group could help with the Missionary of Mercy Day in Toronto or could attend the Lectio Divina in March with Cardinal Collins?
- [Click here](#) and find out some ways your small group can have a blessed Season of Lent. Could helping our sister parish in Hamilton or our missions in Haiti or Kenya be possible?

Leader: **Let us seek the intercession of the Patroness of our Parish as we pray: [Hail Mary](#)**