

## **First Sunday of Lent homily 2015, B Cycle**

**(Begin with a minute of silence.)**

**Were you comfortable with that minute of silence?**

**Most of us are not.**

**How about trying forty days of silence like Jesus did in the desert?**

**(more silence)**

**We read in the second book of Kings that the prophet Elijah ran into the desert to find silence and safety from the King who was trying to kill him. He stayed there for forty days and forty nights, just like Jesus.**

**Elijah's search for a safe and secure place reminded me of a story I heard Friday. I was with the principal at Henry Ford High School. She said one of her students called her for a place to live. His house was in chaos and he could not find a safe place just to be. Yes, sometimes we need a deserted place of quiet and silence in the midst of chaos and violence.**

**In the book of Exodus we hear that the Israelites fled into the desert not for forty days but for forty years. They were running away from slavery and cruel treatment of the Egyptians. It reminds me of the millions people in Syrian and Iraq who are fleeing their countries to find a quiet and peaceful place to raise their families.**

**In today's first reading from the Book of Genesis we hear about Noah and his family being in the ark for forty days and forty nights. These days are spent by themselves responding to God's will.**

**But so often we cannot separate ourselves to go into a quiet place and meet the Lord. My meeting with the principal from Henry Ford was interrupted by a teacher who was setting up the ACT testing for the juniors. She said that one of the most difficult requirements of the test was that the students had to turn in their cell phones before beginning it. They had to be convinced that their tests would be invalidated unless they turned them in while they took the test. Being alone, being in a quiet place, is not in the experience of our youth.**

**And finally in Exodus we have Moses going up onto the mountain of Horeb for how long? >>>>>> Yes, forty days and forty nights. He is there to listen to God's call, to listen to his invitation to covenant. In those forty days Moses receives his special call help form a covenant between God and his people.**

**Maybe one of the core reasons of a shortage of vocations to the ordained life, religious life, married life and committed single life is that we do not take the time to listen, listen, listen to the call of the Lord.**

**Lent ... 40 days of listening.**

**WE are invited to forty days of entering inner silence.**

**In the Early Church members would go into the desert to live solitary lives of silence.**

**Today more than ever we need to choose to enter into silence, we must make going into the desert a priority.**

**Because we live in the world of TVs, cell phones, computers, radios, now more than ever we need to choose to enter into silence of the 40 days of Lent .**

**And what did the early hermits who went into the desert to seek God in silence find out? They wrestled with beasts and demons.**

**Angels comforted them.**

**It is not surprising then that in today's gospel we hear that when Jesus goes into the desert he became conscious of the beasts which surrounded him. He also welcomed the angels came and comforted him.**

**Lent: forty days to enter the desert.**

- **A time for silence so that God may speak to our hearts.**
- **A time to do penance so that we can separate ourselves from those demons which dominate our lives and stops us from listening.**
- **A time to prepare our lives to enter into or renew a deep covenant with God by loving God with our whole heart and mind and soul, and by loving our neighbor as ourselves.**

**Lent is a time when Jesus speaks to our souls tell us he wants us  
If we so choose, lent can be a time when we say we want Jesus to be  
front and center in our lives.**