Last Wednesday our Church calendar
started the Lenten season.
We celebrated Ash Wednesday,
a day on which ashes were placed on our foreheads.
It was a day we were called to start to think about
what we want to do for God.
Pray more…Sacrifice things we enjoy…
And Give more to people in need.
And, of course, we should do that!
But Lent is not just about what we do for God.
In fact, Lent is much more about
what God wants to do for us.
It's all about God's grace at work within us.
It is about recognizing the presence of God
right here and now
and what he is doing for us.

Our Gospel reading tells us of Jesus's time in the desert,
how he battled and overcame Satan
and it reminds us of what God has done for us.
One of the many things God does through Scripture
is strengthen us to overcome temptation.
There are 3 different kinds of temptation in today's Gospel.

1. To avoid the temptation to live for the flesh when Jesus was asked to turn stones to bread. Jesus said, "Do not live by bread alone, but ty the words that come from the mouth of God."
2. Avoid the temptation to live for power. Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. But Jesus said, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test."
3. Avoid the temptation to deny that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus said, "The Lord your God shall you worship, and him alone shall you serve."

The devil is not merely tempting Jesus
with material satisfaction and worldly power.
The devil is encouraging Jesus not just to forget who He is…
but to surrender his identity as the Son of God
and the salvation of all mankind.
The same temptations that Satan used on Jesus
still confront us today.
Materialism is what drives our economy.
We pay more for a latte than a gallon of gas.
There is a horrible power grab for land
as we witness the tragic war afflicting Ukraine.
Secularism too often confronts us on TV and Media.
Lent then becomes the perfect time

to seek the Lord in Scripture…every day.

There we will find the strength to overcome temptation,

to hear God's voice, and wisdom to obey.

Lent is our opportunity to pick up our crosses…resist temptation…

and remember all the wonderful things God has done for us.

Lent asks us to walk in the desert.

Jesus walked in the desert for 40 days…

and in the desert he was tempted.

Temptation is whatever draws someone away

from their relationship with God.

I have thought about my past Lenten seasons.

I feel I have always walked in the desert.

As a child my Lenten gift was to give up candy.

But after communion on Easter Sunday

my dad would always reach in his pocket,

and he would give my brother and me jelly beans.

Lent was over!

As an adult I started to give up drinking beer during Lent.

Easter Sunday I would drink beer. Lent was over!

5 years ago I started to describe Lent as a retreat.

A retreat is when Catholics and other religious people

spend a period of days to pray and be with God.

My Lent became a special time to pray and to be with God.

Lent is not all doom & gloom. Lent means springtime.

After so much snow and cold we are looking forward to spring.

New life begins in the spring.

I am especially charged up for this Lent.

Last weekend I traveled to Denver to witness

one of our own young men, a son of our parish,

be ordained a Transitional Deacon.

Ryan Mack, son of Jim & Jennifer Mack,

will be ordained a priest next year

and will serve his priesthood in Denver, Colorado.

That is the 3rd young man in 2 years

that will be ordained a priest from this parish.

We all should celebrate that.

Every 3rd Wednesday in the Day Chapel

we pray for all priests

in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

I think…all in all…Lent makes us think

about our relationship with God.

During this Lent allow God's grace to work within you.

And then…you pray, fast, and give alms.