



Living in Fantasy

FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS

I *f I Were a Horse* by Elizabeth Bridgman is a children's story about Jenny, who daydreams about being a horse and then accepts her true reality, as she realizes no one will recognize her as a horse. In the end, she finds that she likes herself as she truly is.

The story may also be a metaphor for our human fantasy about sin, by which we try to redefine the world on our own terms, only to realize that life does not go so well when we do this. It is our stealing by which we pretend that something belongs to us rather than to another. It is our lying that attempts to redefine truth in terms of what we want life to be, rather than in what life really is. It is our addictions that redefine the source of meaning and life not as God, but as ourselves and our wants. Lent brings us face to face with who we are—which is not a horse (real or otherwise), but, by God's design, is a daughter or son of God.

The temptations Jesus experienced in the desert were temptations to define life on his own terms, just as we are often tempted to do. Yet, Jesus was the one who got it right. For him, stones were stones, not bread. Power and glory were God's, not his. He would not put God to the test, thinking he could manipulate God and get God to do what Jesus wanted. Jesus was the faithful one. ●

Reflect

What about my life do I struggle to accept?



Filled with the Holy Spirit,
Jesus returned from the Jordan
and was led by the Spirit into the desert
for forty days, to be tempted by the devil.

LUKE 4:1-2A

Dear Padre,

Who decided that fish isn't meat? I really dislike fish; also, it bugs me when my friends eat lobster for dinner on Fridays in the name of "sacrifice."

Latin is the official language of the Catholic Church. Canon law, as written in Latin, states that we must abstain from *carne* (meat), a word that refers to warm-blooded animals that walk on the ground. By that definition, fish is allowed.

You make an excellent point about the lobster dinners and the nature of sacrifice. In the document "Questions and Answers About Lent and Lenten Practices," the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states, "While fish, lobster, and other shellfish are not considered meat and can be consumed on days of abstinence, indulging in the lavish buffet at your favorite seafood place sort of misses the point. Abstaining from meat and other indulgences during Lent is a penitential practice. On the Fridays of Lent, we remember the sacrifice of Christ on Good Friday and unite ourselves with that sacrifice through abstinence and prayer."

As we enter Lent, we must remember that our acts of penance should be more than thinking about just giving something up, like meat. Our fasting isn't just an external discipline—sacrifice for the sake of checking a box. It's supposed to be a sacrifice that leads us closer to God. When we take that deeper step ourselves, then we can invite our friends to go deeper, too. ●



SWEET MARSHMALLOW / SHUTTERSTOCK

Fr. Paul Borowski, CSsR / DearPadre.org

A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

Jesus opposes the attractions of evil...by responding to temptations with the word of God, which says not to take advantage...to obtain privileges. Because true happiness and true freedom are not found in possessing, but in sharing; not in taking advantage of others, but in loving them; not in the obsession of power, but in the joy of service.



VATICAN MEDIA

ANGELUS, ROME, MARCH 6, 2022

Monday

March 10
Lenten Weekday
Lv 19:1–2, 11–18
Mt 25:31–46

Tuesday

March 11
Lenten Weekday
Is 55:10–11
Mt 6:7–15

Wednesday

March 12
Lenten Weekday
Jon 3:1–10
Lk 11:29–32

Thursday

March 13
Lenten Weekday
Est C:12, 14–16,
23–25
Mt 7:7–12

Friday

March 14
Lenten Weekday
Ez 18:21–28
Mt 5:20–26

Saturday

March 15
Lenten Weekday
Dt 26:16–19
Mt 5:43–48

Sunday

March 16
Second Sunday
of Lent
Gn 15:5–12,
17–18
Phil 3:17–4:1 or
3:20–4:1
Lk 9:28b–36

Do you have a question for the Padre?

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