

Reader John Walker Writes

I have had lots of time recently to sit and think, and it has struck me how much time we invest in planning our journey through life. Our plans can be open, transparent and honest, or we may err into dubious behaviour if it seems to be of advantage to us. One of the most common is fiddling our tax return with some creative accountancy - how does that hurt anyone? Some may make false benefit claims. The truth is that we are inclined to take advantage where we can even if our actions are somewhat questionable.



Throughout February the Church is preparing itself for Lent which starts with Ash Wednesday on 26 February. Lent, of course, is the time when Jesus was tempted by Satan. Why did Jesus allow this to happen? Well I would suggest that the God made flesh had to be seen to be tempted just as we are - but not by fiddling His tax or cheating the wine merchant. No, He met with Satan for some God-sized challenges and Satan was denied. Jesus proves it is possible to live a stain free life, yet we think we are doing well if we manage to give up alcohol or chocolate for 40 days through Lent.

As we prepare to deny ourselves during Lent, penances do little to make the world a better place. Let us consider how we might truly give up something precious to us - our time. Our usual efforts, whilst commendable, do little for the world and our local community. So in the next few weeks why not put in preparations to enable you to carry out a venture on the edge of our comfort zone? If Jesus could outface Satan for us, can we not step out in confidence? How about making a meal each week for an elderly neighbour living alone? Or volunteering at a local hospital, school, scout group etc, or babysitting for a young neighbour so they can have some "me time"?

As a part of our Lenten preparations let us pray for a fulfilment of God's purposes in our life's journey.

Yours, in Christ

John