

I have a confession to make. On Ash Wednesday I did a very bad thing. On that <sup>secret</sup> holy day, ~~on that day of penitence~~, that day of fast and abstinence, on that day when Christians around the world resolve to do penance, I went to our parish office and placed on the coffee table a big box of chocolates. I learned who gave up what and how strong they were. One parishioner walked in, smiled wide, picked up a chocolate, and said, "Lucky for me I gave up watermelon for Lent." Then as everyone else watched angrily, he popped the candy into his mouth - chocolate dribbling from his lips.

Temptation is hard to resist, whether it comes in a foil wrapper or hangs from some forbidden tree. The reason temptation bothers us is that we want to do what's right. Temptation bothers good people. And it especially bothers good people who give in.

We all limit ourselves. We all promise to do what's right. We have ideals: "I'd never cheat at work. I'd never have an affair. I'd never have an abortion. I'd never drift from the Church." And then, one day, we do. If we live long enough we'll find ourselves doing things we swore we'd never do. The shadows of those nexts can haunt us a lifetime. We'd like to think we're stronger than we really are. But we are weak. We are tempted. And we give in.

How did Jesus do it? Oh, I know he was God and everything, but here he is in the desert - no one to help - with Mr. Temptation himself. And this was after 40 days - not a box of chocolates on day one. Jesus' power to resist temptation is truly amazing.

It's clear that Jesus has built up a resilience to temptation - his own self-control. How did he resist? We get a clue from his responses to Satan. Every time Jesus opens his mouth, he quotes from the Old Testament, "Not on bread alone are we to live. His angels will take care of you. You shall do homage to the Lord our God." Jesus knew the Scriptures so well that if you scratched him, Bible would ooze out.

Jesus resisted temptations because he kept the Word of God in his heart. He meditated on God. He made God his constant companion.

Lent has arrived - our 40 days in the desert. We may be ready for penance, but are we ready for temptation? This Lent ~~let us~~ <sup>try</sup> reflect daily upon God's Word, and let it dwell deep down within. Meditating on God will help.