

Metanoia, Changing Who We Are – How do We Begin?

“Man shall not live by bread alone...” This is a phrase that we hear every time the Gospel story of Jesus’s temptation in the desert is read, but it meant something different to me with this rehearing of it. After fasting for forty days and forty nights, Jesus was hungry. It would be difficult to imagine thinking about anything other than food at that time. Yet when he was tempted with turning the rocks into bread, he was able to refocus and realize that this immediate answer to his body’s hunger was not the right thing to do.

In reading the passage this time it reminded me that as Christ’s hunger must have been an overwhelming consideration for him, we sometimes get fixated on things in our life that we cannot look beyond. However, to move forward we must put those things into perspective as Jesus did.

There is a need to step back from the day-to-day things that can consume all our attention and adjust our view of that around us. What we perceive as the best way in the short term may not be the way we should proceed. A phrase attributed to many sources says, “If the only tool you have is a hammer, you treat every problem as a nail.” When we are too close to something it is possible to not be able to tell where it fits into the whole.

Lent is a time of year that reminds us to do just that — to step back and reorient ourselves. To take in our surroundings and determine exactly where we are and if we are headed in the right direction.

There is no better place to gain that perspective than on a university campus. The university has a rich and diverse atmosphere. We have students, faculty, and staff that come from many backgrounds for many reasons to create a vibrant place to live. By interacting with each other and learning from all those different perspectives we gain a larger picture of where we are in the world and how we should move forward. Taking the time to contemplate those perspectives helps us grow.

Reflection on the Gospel for the First Sunday of Lent

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