Lent 1, 2016, Holy Trinity

Luke 4:1-15

 When I was in my early twenties, and living at home, our next door neighbour expressed to my mother that I “was full of the devil.”

 What she really meant was “devilment” and I am sure that there are some people to-day who may think that some things do not change.

 I hope, however, that to-day I am not literally full of the devil, but I can say that “there is still a bit of the devil in me” which means that I am still tempted.

Indeed, “there is still a bit of the devil in all of us” because we have not yet fully overcome sin.

Jesus spent a length of time in the desert overcoming the devil, and Lent is time for us to get rid of whatever bit of the devil remains in us and overcoming sin in our lives.

Whenever we sin we have forgotten who we are and what God has done for us.

Remembering who we are and what God has done for us helps us to keep away from sin.

Whenever we sin we forget the central belief of our creed that Jesus died and rose for us.

Lent is a time when we reflect on the passion and death of Jesus so that by remembering this passion and death we may overcome temptation and consequently we may not sin, and when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus at Easter – we have died to sin and risen to new life with Jesus.

Jesus overcame the devil during this time in the desert and we want to overcome the devil, Satan, evil or whatever name you want, in our lives.

We overcome the devil by putting God first in every way. The three quotations from Deuteronomy cited by Jesus when talking with the devil in this morning’s Gospel remind us of putting God first in everything.

“Man does not live by bread alone.” (The full quotation is “…not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the Lord.”)

“You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve.”

“You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.”

When we live the way of the world by not putting God first we sin and this leaves us with a feeling of guilt.

We, then, seek forgiveness and salvation to deaden the feeling of guilt.

When we overcome temptation and put God first in everything and live by the word of the Lord then we live in faith, hope, love and forgiveness.

This is how Lent begins; Jesus shares his victory over temptation.

He knows that he belongs to God and to God alone and this thought enables him to realise that he is not to rely on his own powers alone.

Our Gospel narrative to-day tells us that he is full of the Holy Spirit.

And so our Lent begins as we realise that we are full of the Holy Spirit and that we belong to God and God alone.

In this knowledge and in our knowledge of the Scriptures and through constant prayer we are able to overcome temptation so that we do not sin.

This is the challenge so that by the time Easter comes we will die to sin and rise to the new life in Christ.

May this be so for each of us and many more persons throughout the world.